

Parodist and prig

By Gerard Benson

JOHN ADLARD:
Owen Seaman
His Life and Work
199pp. The Eighteen Nineties
Society, 3 Kemplay Road, London
NW3 1TA. £4.65.

One feature of the complicated, lengthy and embittered schenism which surrounded the appointment of a successor to Tennyson as Laureate was a number of skilful parodies of the works of some of the fancied contenders which appeared in *Punch* and *The World*. They brought a new satirical dimension to the debate and were the work of Owen Seaman, a young and largely unknown professor of literature and classics at Durham College of Science. Viewed through the wrong end of the long telescope of time these pieces seem little more than contempt; caustic, intelligent, destructive, even funny, but lacking the insight and indeed the respect on which really good parody relies, the work of an adult and self-confident versifier. At the time, however, they were received with acclaim and they launched their author on a distinguished career which brought him a long editorship of *Punch*, a knighthood and, so recent as a baronetcy, awarded in 1932.

John Adlard has researched Seaman's life and its surrounding circumstances for the Eighteen Nineties Society and has tried his best to present his subject sympathetically. However hard he has tried, though, an inflexible man, principled, snobbish and devoted to social ascent, emerges from the page: a stern Victorian schoolmaster of a parodist, one whose targets (like those of a schoolmaster) are carefully selected for their unlikeliness to bite back, one who mucks about with the shameful Wilde episode and who writes apposing letters to

those among his butts from whom he fears retaliation. He rode, too, the winds of change. In early August 1914 he wrote flippantly in *Punch* of going to fight "for love of a bounding Balkan" but over the following weeks his contributions are straight-faced and jingoistic, reading like Kipling, without the energy. Seaman himself deftly camouflaged, writing things years after his initial success: "The worst of a parodist's existence is that his reputation has to depend on the virility of his victims." True, but who chooses the victims but the parodist himself?

The portrait of the man shows him warts and all, and John Adlard's picture of the social milieu of the period is admirably composed. We are given a glimpse of a country house cricket match in which O. Seaman "compiled a very stylish nine" for a team captained by J. M. Barrie. There is a contemporary description of the famous Wednesday editorial dinner at *Punch*. A full chapter is devoted to Seaman's visit to India with Pearl Craigie in 1902-03 as representatives of *Punch* at the Delhi Durbar. "Our party had brought between us forty-seven tons of essays and uniforms" wrote Pearl Craigie. There is a delightful cameo showing the "towered" Years beside the "spruce" Owen at a reading: "The wilds of Ireland... arm in arm with Savile Row", according to Lady Randolph Churchill.

Owen Seaman: *His Life and Work* is one of a series which the Society is producing with the aim of collecting the available biographical and critical material on the world of letters at the turn of the century. The books are intended to preserve records of these writers while sources of research still exist, as much, it seems, for posterity as for the present-day reader. Volumes on Olive Custance and John Oliver Hobbes (Pearl Craigie) have already been produced and further titles are in preparation.

In the lions' den

By Peter Prince

W. J. WEATHERLY:
Squaring Off: Mallet v Baldwin
217pp. Robson Books. £4.50.

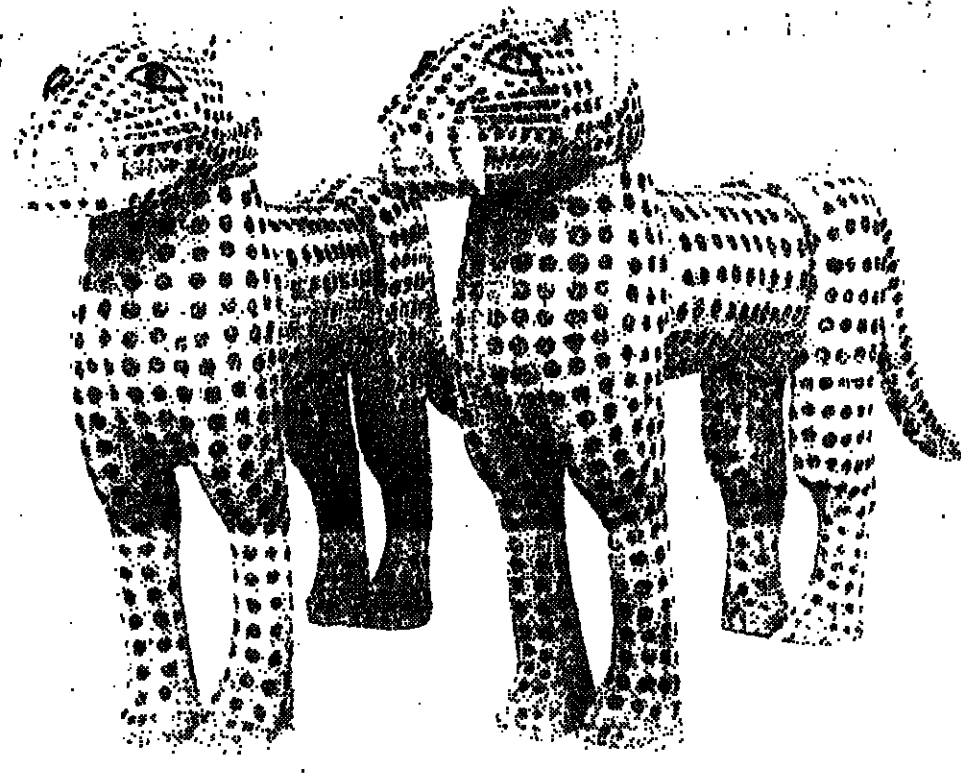
This is a strangely uneasy book, less interesting at first sight than it seems it ought to have been. While making few claims to be a work of literary analysis it is yet too light on biographical research to make a successful Higher Gospel. A worthy feeling persists that the author does not know his subjects with quite the degree of intimacy that would justify making a book out of his chance encounters with them. Or else, if he does, he is doing so in a way that appears here, he has been much too delicate in exploiting his insider's knowledge. Norman Mallet and James Baldwin, after all, are among the most publicized writers of our time. One more self-found the magnificent edifice will not do at this stage—particularly when, as in Mallet's case, previous tours have been most expertly conducted by the edifice itself.

Unable or unwilling to supply us with much new dope, W. J. Weatherly has chosen to construct his book around "the long-standing unbroken bond" between the two lions, arguing that the feud between them is "the essence of black-white relations in America during the 1950s. Again there is a rather unconvincing air about the operation. Apart from the period when they followed the publication of *The White Negro* (1955) which Baldwin with some justification saw as one more attempt by the white man to rob the black of his authenticity, of his robes under the hooding of the late Tony Village, even on the evidence of *Squaring Off*—to have been fuelled more by personal and career rivalries than by ideological strains. Black feelings about the white man's advances and the white man's feelings about the black man's advances are not a superficial matter. And it is only too apparent that the book is a

should be set at a dinner party where the two men meet—and fall to clash.

In fact, the good things in *Squaring Off* depend very little on the Mallet v Baldwin theme. This is one of the best short accounts of the early to mid-1960s American mood that I have read: sober, accurate and very sharp. Reading it, one realizes how much it has become a cliché, in this country at least, to look back at the previous decade as a time of fatuous optimism and frivolous radical stultification. *Squaring Off* reminds us that outside the country, at least, an intense seriousness lay below much of the decade's surface frenzy. It is this background of great themes, of the gap between transcendental yearnings and monstrous realities, that lends power to so much American writing in the 1950s. It constitutes the meat of Baldwin's famous prophetic essays, of course, and is equally important in the success of a work like *Armies of the Night* where the clown figure Mallet in the centre of the stage, appearing, pleasing, riding, and decorously, is thrown into giant relief by the huge searchlights of the American War Machine of the ride, and the American Protest Movement on the other.

Squaring Off borrows something of this power. Mr. Weatherly writes as a man disappointed by the failure of the black man to live without any compulsion to be polite, who risked careers and lives to bring them about. His respect is, perhaps, the more remarkable as being the attitude of an Englishman. He has a comparative approach to the complexities of American life, has much more usually resembled that of Kingsley Amis's far hero. Indeed, *Squaring Off* itself provides a good example of the typical English effort. Mr. Weatherly took the English publisher the late Tony Village to meet Baldwin in his Village apartment. It was shortly after the killing of Malcolm X. The luckless Godwin attempted to laugh Baldwin out of his rage by the bizarre and tedious and his then the Chinese top hat and a red time in America. It is not a superficial matter. And it is only too apparent that the book is a



Two nineteenth century ivory leopards from Benin City in Nigeria, presented to Queen Victoria and loaned to the British Museum by George V. They are included in "A Royal Heritage", a Silver Jubilee exhibition by the Museum and the British Library of items in their collections, brought together to celebrate royal jubilees, and other royal occasions, and the royal associations of both Museum and Library. The exhibition continues until July 24, and is in the King's Library, which was designed to house the library collected by George III and presented to the BM by George IV in 1823.

Here's to the hacks

By Roger Garfitt

TOM SHARPE:
The Great Pursuit
235pp. Secker and Warburg. £3.90.

Francis, the London literary agent whose machinations initiate *The Great Pursuit*, has built a successful agency on the inversion of his literary principles: if his Leavisite training tells him a book is thoroughly meretricious, he writes, he knows he has found a bestseller. *The Moral* Novel has become his handbook in reverse.

Never, in Dr Louth's terms, has Francis read greater abominations than *Pause O Men for the Virgin*, the latest manuscript to land on his desk. The story of an affair between a boy of seventeen and a woman of eighty, it combines "significance" with obscenity. No marketing problem here—except that the author insists on remaining anonymous. That will never do: there must be a name for the media to basty about, a face for the chat shows. Casting around for an impersonator, Francis lights on Peter Piper, his debt to his literary conscience, the only serious author on his books.

A cold going

By Richard Osborne

MACDONALD HARRIS:
The Balloonist
273pp. Gollancz. £4.75.

In the late 1890s the sky vehicle, inflated with a lighter-than-air gas, delighted and amazed us as it did long to scientists, a worry to secret services and a delight to novelists and song-writers. "balloon-woot" "Mo and you up in the blue—just us two—oh, oh!"

It is into ton days of July 1897 that MacDonald Harris puts his novel, with "Bonnie and Clyde" on the dedication page. But I read the book, and with less than a week's delay, I was surprised to learn from the blurb that this is a "witty" (as well as "richly sensual and ingenious") novel, and that Gustav's love affair with Luisa is "silly" (as well as "silly" and "silly").

Ten years before Francis had recommended Piper to read *The Moral Novel*. Each year since then Piper has submitted a fresh version of *Search for a Last Childhood*, an account of his adolescence in Finchley, rewritten in the style of successive Louthian models. There has been a Lawrencean, a Finchley, a Jamesian, a Finchley, even a dreadful hybrid of Finchley with Yoknapatawpha County. Francis contacts Piper at present struggling to transmute Finchley to *The Moral Mountain*. Piper accepts, and is whisked off on a promotional tour of the States. There he meets his fate, in the person of Baby Hutchinson, née Suggs, Miss Penelope 1935, wife of his American publisher.

"Peggy", perhaps, is hardly the word for Baby Hutchinson. Silicone breasts, depressed thighs, pussy lifts and face lifts have translated her into an ageless artefact. She reminds Piper of Yeats's jewelled birds that sang to Baby. There is a twenty-year-old golden boy, the literary genius of her dreams. She abducts him and conveys him down South. Their disappearance is excellent publicity. Francis remains untroubled, until blackmail letters arrive from Piper, in hiding at Bibliopolis on the Pontine river.

Francis's only recourse is to unearth the true author of *Pause O Men for the Virgin*. He steals himself for an affair with Cynthia Bogden, who typed the novel and knows the author's telephone number. Cynthia, too, desires a secretary; she will not divulge the number

until Francis suggests having it engraved inside their engagement ring as a code d'amour. Thus apprised, at a cost of £100 per digit, Francis dials the number. The phone is answered by Dr Sydney Louth.

Francis is shocked into a vehement attack on Lewisville, Louisiana, and all critics whose influence inhibits writers and takes the pleasure out of reading. He sets himself to reveal all in *The Great Pursuit*, a book dedicated to Grub Street, to those who have the honesty to write for money. What is odd when you consider that *The Great Pursuit*, as we have it, begins as a satire on commercial publishing.

This is one contradiction in a book which seems altogether oddly assorted. Cynthia Bogden, for instance, is a middle-aged dragon straight out of *Wodehouse*, a caricature of the kind that *Wodehouse* can sustain because, imaginatively, he creates what he needs. His professional life has therefore been mainly spent as "odd-job man"—radio and TV journalism, occasional press features and documentary films. It is true that however much they may have hit the mood of the time, the Spanish book (*Volunteer in Spain*) is too level, not surely, in the same novel. *The Great Pursuit* is superficially entertaining by virtue of its pace, at any level below the surface it seems to have been developed with the same casualness that has Francis educated at Cambridge on page 2 and at Oxford on page 3.

of aardonic humor, yes. But the author's untrifled direction-finding in the cross-currents that he loosed, his command of language (language, too, French, German and Swedish, plus some confident echoes of Greek and Latin) and his avoidance, perhaps excision, of the obvious made me follow his turgid (yes) happily and without pity or terror.

On the surface it is three explorers in a balloon, hoping to navigate to the north pole and back from and to Spitzbergen. One of them, the narrator, a Swedish major called Gustav Crispin, is a "megnet-electrical" aerographer. Another, Waldemar, is a journalist and the third—well, that's even less clear. Theodor seems to be there because the balloon's three live bodies of about that weight overall. Theodor modestly disappears behind hummocks of ice to answer the call of nature, as the author puts it.

Off they go, with some homing pigeons for link with civilization and every time Gustav curls up in his reindeer coat to sleep, he dreams: preferably erotic dreams, preferably of Luisa. These dreams lead him into a romantic past and a European pastures. Less than half the book is airborne exploration. When, in that exploration, a windless, dumb cold event

FICTION

Dissidence and after

By Roy Fuller

JOHN SOMMERFIELD:
The Imprinted
176pp. London Magazine Editions. £5.

John Sommerfield was born in 1908. I have known his name for well over forty years. Indeed, at the start of that period had a slight acquaintance with the man. This volume of semi-fictional or imaginary memoirs (as the blurb describes it) had an interest for me that I must try to keep in critical perspective. On the other hand, the book disappoints more curiosity the people in Sommerfield's life appeared in fictional names and I suspect may have been further fictionalized by a process of transference and amalgamation. Incidents related are apt to be archetypal rather than historical, and conversations are reconstructed with a novelist's amplification and freedom and (occasionally) gurgulousness. All this may sound to add up to an unpleasing genre, and in fact the book must in a few places lose its grip on and somewhat overstate the reader. It moves about in time with fundamental skill and subtlety yet also without clumsiness; and sometimes a simplifying romanticism takes the place of a hard look at facts and emotions.

Still, it gives a remarkably truthful-seeming and moving portrait of the author and his times. Sommerfield was a member of the CTCB from the very early 1930s and remained so, one gathers, until his own late forties. He fought in Spain in the International Brigade and served with the RAF during the Second World War. When his return to the United Kingdom was delayed in the early months of New Writing, he was already known to connoisseurs of the "proletarian literature" as the author of a novel, *May Day*, about the strike about the RAF, was familiar through being first printed in *Penguin New Writing*.

The most startling (and poignant) confession in *The Imprinted* is that the author toughly emphasizing that he is not "a real writer"; that he once hoped to be able to write but he lacked imagination, "the creative imagination". His professional life has therefore been mainly spent as "odd-job man"—radio and TV journalism, occasional press features and documentary films. It is true that however much they may have hit the mood of the time, the Spanish book (*Volunteer in Spain*) is too level, not surely, in the same novel. *The Great Pursuit* is superficially entertaining by virtue of its pace, at any level below the surface it seems to have been developed with the same casualness that has Francis educated at Cambridge on page 2 and at Oxford on page 3.

Not fit for a dog

COLIN WATSON:

One Man's Meat
191pp. Eyre Methuen. £3.50.

The comic detective story is an extremely demanding art form. There are few more certain ways of achieving failure than in inventing a character called Lord Water Pimsey, or a policeman whose only characteristic is his immense, supposedly mirth-provoking inefficiency. Colin Watson is one of the very few writers to have overcome this difficulty of the genre, in a series of novels set in the town of Flaxborough, which, with its rundown harbour, dilapidated Municipal Theatre (now the Alhambra Billiards Club) and its staggeringly illiberal, staggeringly acquisitive and staggeringly crooked population, needs

One of the meanings embraced by the title comes from the behaviour patterns fixed in an animal's impressionable days or weeks of life and in Sommerfield's case refers to his early Marxist convictions. Among the many accounts of changes in ideology of the men of the 1930s there has been lacking a description not of loss of basic faith but of growing weariness with the day-to-day struggle, growing disillusion with politicians and "politicizing"; and the sense, growing with middle and old age, of the importance of the more peculiar quirks of love, the significance of death, the pleasures of contemplation, the amazingly symmetrical patterns of life, one's own included. Much of this appears in *The Imprinted* in a way that seems all the more fresh and honest for being somewhat naively told. In the strange manner Sommerfield has continued to be a writer, "real" or not, so he has remained a dissident though no longer active. I hope subsequent impression of the book will be called for and not merely to give an opportunity for correction of the literals, misapprehensions and misquotations.

What Marcie knew

By Anita Brookner

ERICH SEGAL:
Oliver's Story
202pp. Harvill, Macgibbon, Granada. £2.95.

For readers of this journal who may have lived through the phenomenon of *Love Story* (twenty million copies sold) without actually noticing it, a word of explanation. In 1970 Erich Segal, a classicist at Yale, no doubt overcome by the accident of an academic meeting, sketched an outline for a book that never actually got turned into prose but which, for some reason, zoomed all the way to the top and turned its author into a household name. *Love Story* (Rich Protestant boy marries poor Catholic girl who dies of leukaemia) is so tersely written, with exchanges of such brushiness, and such interesting inversions of logic that one suspects that it may have been written in a hurry, in the course of an academic meeting. It is, the best of luck to Erich Segal who gave the world the immortal and truthful *Love*, "Love means never having to say you're sorry". Academic life is a bit like that too.

Can he do it again? *Oliver's Story* takes up where *Love Story* left off. Our hero, now a lawyer as well as a widower, is killing time defending the poor and underprivileged. "Just when the hell do you intend to plug your motor into life again?" demands his palaeolithic third-law, his father, at all. Oliver Barrett IV has chosen to be a lawyer. Oliver is a Jewish doctor, which prompts the insane speculation that the original novel is going to be written all over again but with a different religion to mess it up. It is, however, cool-headed Marcie Binnendale who remains in the Binnendale who remains in the Binnendale department store fortune, she is in every way a fit mate for Oliver B. IV. Both are rich. Both have been "hurt". Both are rather unimpressive in the way they are

A taste for apocalypse

By Victoria Glendinning

FRANCIS STUART:
A Hole in the Head
215pp. Martin Brinn and O'Keeffe. £4.

Francis Stuart's writing grows out of obsession, and it is hard to pretend to differentiate his protagonists' preoccupations from his own. The autobiographical nature of his novel *Black List—Section II* was acknowledged by the inclusion of real names and happenings. *Barnaby Shane*, the hero of *A Hole in the Head*, is a man who, like himself, is a writer. He is a man who, like himself, is a writer. He is a man who, like himself, is a writer.

The story serves as a framework for Mr Stuart's vision of the corruption, hypocrisy and violence of the world, and of the peculiar position of the visionary in it. On his recovery *Barnaby* fears that "without my obsessions I may feel naked and utterly out of place". His breakdown proves to be a lesser horror than the facing of reality; "Since my return to so-called sanity... the stench from the poisoned planet had become suffocating." He tells the children about the horrors of chemical warfare, and Emily Brontë comments that in the deepest dungeons of war and Zanzibar we never imagined anything like that.

Mr Stuart is a powerful and interesting writer not because he writes particularly well but because he writes passionately. He can be funny, as when *Barnaby* gives an alcoholic literary lecture in Belbury which develops into a surrealism of a Garsington-like party attended by Yeats, Edith Sitwell, Lady Dorothy Wodesley, Gandhi and a goat. But even here he writes like a man driven. Much of the drive comes from the "revengeful revisionism" that is produced, as he says, in children when they lose their trust in the world. Liberty, democracy, Christian values, law and order, are damned at the end of the book as the hypocritical weapons of authority.

There is nothing original in this view; but *Barnaby* is a rebel without a cause. He believes as much in the qualifications for acting as a mediator in the siege as in a facility for entering into different viewpoints. An aptitude for sharing extreme positions and beliefs. A quotation from the back of the book reminds readers that Mr Stuart chose to live in Berlin in the 1940s. He is drawn, for his own reasons, towards apocalyptic. The attraction of "extreme positions and attitudes" makes *Barnaby* seek other "some wolves from history and fiction to be his companions—Van Gogh, Keats, St Teresa of Avila, Dostoevsky, Christ ("the eternal catatonic"), as well as the Brontës. He harps on the supposedly dark relationship between Brantwell and Emily, and shares Heathcliff's desire to be under the earth with Cathy.

He recovers. He finds human contact in a social encounter with a psychiatrist, and a fellow mental patient—sex, thanks be to God, is the one thing that does not seem to let *Barnaby* down.

Barnaby, who like Mr Stuart is a writer living in Ireland, goes to Belfast, which is called Belbury—no, presumably, in an attempt to disguise its identity, but to universalize it, for "what was going on wasn't just in Belbury, lived the Belbury savagery was as nothing to much that was happening elsewhere". Here he gets mixed up with what seems to be the official IRA, makes friends with two teenage children who are holding a kidnapped politician in a wrecked house, and during the siege by police and troops which follows is ironically chosen as "mediator". *Barnaby* is a man who, like himself, is a writer. He is a man who, like himself, is a writer.

What sustains this Irish Stephen, who is his anger, and a belief in his personal vision. In the damned world, "clusters of new cells of perception" are forming "in a kind of consensatory process". And the book ends with a sentence that is a Amazonian tribe that punctures its children's skulls to let in both good and evil spirits, thus "widening their range of perception". Mr Stuart's perceptions seem widened in one way or another; one could wish that his imagined Emily Brontë had not been such a easily and docile creature, since the good spirits, like the real Emily, can be every bit as fierce as the evil ones.

May Books

Fiction

JOHN MORTIMER
Will Shakespeare £4.25

OWEN SELA
An Exchange of Eagles £3.95

MICHAEL GILBERT
Petrella at Q £3.95

IRIS BROMIGE
A Distant Song £3.50

PHILIP McCUTCHAN
The Eros Affair £3.75

HELEN YGLESIAS
A Family Feeling £4.50

JAMES GRADY
The Great Pebble Affair £3.95

IAN McLACHLAN
The Seventh Hexagram £3.05

HELENA OSBORNE
White Poppy £4.50

ERICH SEGAL
Love Story (reissue) £2.95

ROSELEEN MILNE
Borrowed Plumes £3.75

Non-Fiction

FRANK EMERY
The Red Soldier £6.25

RAYMOND GARDNER
Land of Time Enough £4.95

F. W. DILLISTONE
G.H. Dodd £5.95

Hodder & Stoughton

A bit on the side

By Ruth Brandon

JASON DITTON:
Part-Time Crime
An Ethnography of Fiddling and
Pilferage
195pp. Macmillan. £10.

Which of us has not done our share of pilfering and "fiddling"? Speaking for myself, my stapler and clipboard revive fond memories of a job I held some years ago; and many were the telephone calls I have made at the expense of one institution or another, to say nothing of the friends I have abetted in similar felonies. These lapses do not make me feel dishonest, any more than they stain my character in the eyes of friends. On the contrary, one is inclined to dismiss anybody who seems shocked by such peccadilloes as a hopeless prig.

But what is trifling individually becomes enormous collectively. British blue-collar employee thefts, Jason Ditton tells us, in *Part-Time Crime*, are currently estimated at a more than 100 per cent increase over a more than 100 per cent increase in burglary or robbery in the same period. Evidently, then, the time was ripe for a book such as this. Criminologists have tended to concentrate on the part-time crime of the day of the part-time criminal is that he does not consider himself a criminal, nor his crime a crime. "I don't bother about it at all," said one of Ditton's subjects, "just think of me as subsidizing my wages, that's all."

Dillon's fieldwork for this book was done in a bakery he calls Wheelbread's. He worked there as an undergraduate during the vacations and it was a natural choice for the PhD work upon which the book is based. His first intention was to concentrate on the "protection against racial restriction," but this prospect was soon abandoned as he became fascinated by the one topic which was universally discussed throughout the plant and was very close to his own experience. "I know [laugh] we all make a bit on the side . . . know what I mean?" No, I didn't, but by God—I was going to." And he succeeded. Here it all is: the pathetic techniques used by white and colored employees to avoid the hated fiddles; how they are daddled and the daddler identified in his own eyes, set out in meticulous academic detail. What he told you did it (virtually everyone: those despatch managers who will not conjoin are classified as fiddlers). The author has the ability to imagine the extent of their exclusion from the undercurrents of factory life). We are shown how the fiddles are worked, from the penalties added on to the careless conscientious bill by the friendly houseman to the young man seduced by wholesome tales to shops and institutions, with or without the contrivance of the shop steward-manager. Approaches to fiddling are analysed; we meet the fiddler, the "Robin Hood." People discuss their motives for fiddling. Some see it as a way of getting back at a hard-voiced customer, the ones who make me run back to the van for my bags of coal are my immediate targets. "I get off of my head as I'm concerned. It's so damn good because everyone else gets off."

I find this a curious and altogether depressing line of reasoning. It is not, as it seems to me, to be feared that it is impossible to do anything to feel disgusted with one's whole life, or to feel so completely neglected and equally impossible to help one's fellow-men as to give up one's life in the service of the ungrateful. The fault lies with our society, not with the individual. It is the lack of a lofty, noble ideal, a life on the side, as it were, which makes the individual feel so completely expressed by those very principles which he is one of the chief promoters of. It is only when the spectacles of the things are studied in detail, when they are no longer masked by the glamour of the ideal, that we are forced to consider the many sordid aspects of them. One of the most unpleasant aspects of this kindling or Wellbeing is that the whole idea is misinterpreted first of all by the general public, who are encouraged to overcharge customers where they pay so that they run no risk of the well-takings coming short in which case the shortfall must be made up out of the pockets of the shareholders, and is regarded as inevitable; and the system is therefore utterly dishonest.

The "fiddle" is not the only moral dilemma discussed in this book. Obviously the position of the researcher in a project such as this one is not the only one that affects his real interest: he is not going to get anywhere; but if he works under cover then his own moral position when he blows the gaff is highly questionable. If it is the narrowness of a muckraking journalist, then the action is justified by the end result. The academic researcher is not in this position, having no particular axe to grind, but not free of the effects of his exposé will be no less keenly felt. Jason Dixon is painfully aware of this ambiguity, and tries to talk his way around it. He makes one brave attempt to defend himself, and is sought to protect the identity of the bakery and of those studied by omis-

ing names and changing other irrelevant facts"—but admits elsewhere that many of his erstwhile colleagues will suffer a cut in real wages as a result of his efforts. He also admits that he is not sure that other sociologists (this section is particularly amply referenced) have behaved just as unacceptably.

The justification is presumably the advancement of knowledge. Nothing, says Dittus, has hindered the advancement of knowledge. He "does not provide a fullblown ethnography of the bread salesman . . . I have, if only by imputation, provided 'a complete recipe' of the bread salesman, may successfully go about fiddling. And, incidentally, put many a housewife on the alert. The moral of the book is simple. We must never for a moment forget that the millman, the bread salesman, the housewife are just as discernible as the rest of us.



Moresambes and Wives on Blackpool beach in 1853. One of a collection of photographs by Thurston Hopkins, the latest in the series of photographic monographs published by Gordon Fraser in conjunction with the Arts Council. (44pp and 73 plates, £2.95.)

The pin-ball game

By Phyllis Willmott

RICHARD BERTHOUD
The Disadvantages of Inequality:
A Study of Social Deprivation.
207pp. Macdonald and Jane's, 54.95

Richard R. Kohn's study of social deprivation is the intelligent, honest, candid, but just long, honest, honest. It is for those who have never been able to understand the current debate sufficiently to come to a decision on where they stand. It is for those who cannot accept that poverty and deprivation, in a real sense of the words, continue in a country where over a third of households are council tenants and where more than half of our occupied homes are overcrowded. It is for those who, generous vent, have not in the past been available to those who need them; it is for those who recognize the problem as a real one and yet are uneasy and uncertain about what needs to be done; since the day presented with the

latest scandals on abuse and "scrounging" on the welfare state and the poor, shocked by the plight of the homeless or yet another group of battered or neglected child.

The strength of *The Disadvantaged* lies in that Berthoud gathers together a mass of evidence from previous research, supplemented by his own observations and surveys, to set the totality in an unusually comprehensible and vivid way. There are chapters on inadequate and disadvantage generally, on education and social security, on housing, unemployment and employment, and geographically, on basic themes of the book. It is the part that the "incidence of social misfortunes" plays in disadvantage and poverty, and here to advantage, that Berthoud's skill in presenting his theme in a lively way can be demonstrated. "We can see life," he says, "as a game of pinball." He goes on:

When we play pin-ball, the exact score we achieve depends on the force and partly on the direction of the ball, and partly on the distribution of the pins. In life, the pins are the social structure.

The thetan labyrinth

By Donald MacRae

ROY WALLIS :
The Road to Total Freedom
A Sociological Analysis of Science
and Technology
 282pp. Heinemann Educational
 16s. 50.

Roy Wallis describes Scientology as the "largest of the new religions." I doubt this. I can certainly think of recent sects formed in Africa and Asia which are larger. And Scientology really a religion? Its founder says it is, but he offers no proof. Some of the functions usually performed by religions is clear. That it offers an imaginatively powerful cosmology for those who like such things is also clear. But what defines it to a kind of salvation—or at least to what is conceived as a superior way of being—is also true. But that it is a religion by a number of other important skillful means, everything a religion should define, is not so clear. Is it sacred or is it not? "The sacred is the all—Dr Wallis does not altogether convince me. Nor do such sub-categories as "religious movement" or "secular religion" seem quite to fit Scientology."

It is not clear that this cult seem very nearly *sui generis* and, sociologically, very interesting.

Something else is clear. Science-
tology has been a movement
of such extreme defensiveness that
it has often been aggressive and has
embodied punitive codes, and, unlike
most novel cults, it has had the
power to arouse hostile official
reactions from London to Pretoria
to Victoria, reactions of the kind
which have driven our secularized
religiously tolerant bureaucracy to
orders. (Some parallels might
suppose be found in the sad story of
W. Reich.) The punitive defensiveness
was once very marked: one of the
of economic life, the kind of
the "naturalized" companies
hensively as "enemies of mankind
the planet—and all life". Science-
tology's leader—now it seems a kind
of *deus absconditus*—Ron Hubbard
once a writer of pulp sci-fi fiction
was criticized for the disappearance
those who "may be deprived of
property or injured by any means be-
any scientologist . . . may be
ricked, and lied to or destroyed".
Critics and apostates were in fact
sued, threatened with legal action,
and excommunicated. I find it
much such things are disastrous
I suppose it is surprising that mon-
cults have not in fact employed like
means. It is also comforting for
sociologists of religion, though Dr.
Wallis has clearly had his trouble
in researching and writing about
and his text includes a rejoinder
to a Scientologist sociologist, of
which more later. But I suppose that
those who have most felt the wrath
and ingenuity of the Scientologists
are the members of the World Peace
Council. And the World Peace Coun-
cil, not necessarily saturated of univer-
sity or solemn respect.

The cult had its precursor in "Dianetics", the therapeutic doctrines of which I strove unavailingly to grasp about twenty-five years ago. Scientology followed, a more authoritative and authoritarian movement, centred on Hubbard and commanding a vocabulary of tax and rhetoric not unlike that which will be found in motor cycle manuals—pace Mr Pirbright. An elaborate ladder of purification, organization, finance and enlightenment was established. (Most recently the cult has become less obscure, less dogmatic, but has added to its concern an active pursuit of objects of public virtue.) The gnosis centres on the "therapeutic" but is differentiated from the primal spiritual potency immortal but smothered by the cosmic games of creativity, caught up and limited by involvement in the material world. The cosmic task of the cult might be to cleanse and return the thetans to an immortal, pristine form. The preferred methods are those of ascent by the ladder of esoteric knowledge which involves the use of a gadget—the "E-meter"—and recapitulation or rediscovery of past existences. But the task, given due diligence, may be reduced to completion *in toto* and is reduced here and now to giving the individual the status of cause, not effect; of agent, not patient.

All this is seen as something both far beyond ordinary nature and yet as technological. As I once heard an older scientist at a conference, "it looks a good creed for dentists and computer programmers (and the rest, too, have souls to be saved). The Wallis compares Scientology's organization to that of a major international corporation, but doesn't think he is right. No doubt, but he says that if it is right, it must be a business and a bureaucracy, but this does not result in something at all like ITT or IBM, even though I suppose some Scientologists would rather enjoy the latter corporation (and does not "electric" = "corporate" = "electronic"?). But Scientologists are in science or technology: *they are* involved with a romantic idealism of both, and with a cult in which membership seems neither cheap nor easy and which seems to give members personal satisfaction but no few or no demands on the capacity for communion and fraternity. To me it seems bleak.

Dr Wallis has manifestly worked prodigiously and under strain. He has a certain charm, but his internal expository logic is unclear and his language is awkward: at times he writes like a Scientologist. Nor is he, perhaps he could not be too easily clear and full on all matters of interest, but he is certainly not cold but I am not sure that it is adequate sociology of a sect formation, perhaps because it is not based on participant observation and because Dr Wallis has a little trouble in imagining the perspective for his subject matter, inside the sect, work in such fields. Nonetheless I give that the concept of apparatus of charisma or magical persuasion really fits the data. The book is well written. *The Quest for Total Freedom* is a most interesting, candid and valuable book.

A real Scientologist, Dr. Simmons, who is also a sociologist who taught in Illinois and at Santa Barbara, provides us with his latest critical appendix. He prides himself on expounding some "karmic" conceptual "scenarios" lambastes him for not doing real book research of the kind to be found in a "research method class". The charge is true, but irrelevant: Research in this kind of case is not possible. He does such a good job of showing how apparently unaware of the alternative strategies, less mechanical positivistic in their nature. But Dr. Simmons is centrally concerned with two things: this book, he says, do not deal with the good done by many individuals by the Church. Scientology, the book is not concerned with what Dr. Simmons knows which is, for him, the Science works.

BIOGRAPHY

The foolhardy philologist

By T. A. Shippey

HUMPHREY CARPENTER:
J. R. R. Tolkien
A Biography
287pp. Allen and Unwin, £4

The simplest way to understand *The Lord of the Rings* is to take it as the great work of national pride, designed to re-establish the mythological creatures and heroes of English literature. It would have been fine if only the French had not been so good at the same exception, the places and characters of *The Lord of the Rings* do not bear French names, but names borrowed from English or Norse or Welsh or Celtic or even from obscure languages which nevertheless preferred; and though not even he could eliminate Latinisation vocabulary entirely from modern English, a time went on for some time crucial to the development of the English vocabulary for being linguistically suspect. "Fairly", for instance (derived from Old French *fair*), is supplanted after two pages by "elf" (from Germanic *elf*), "elf" (the "goblin" he goes on for a while but its suspiciously Latin etymology causes it in *The Lord of the Rings* to give way to the "elf" of Alms: totally obscure word).

In his professional life the distinction Tolkien must have been conscious of every single day was that between Old English and Old Norse on the one hand—both Germanic languages, related by a strong and regular network of sound-changes, and closely similar to each other in the Middle and Modern English on the other, still Germanic languages, but increasingly less like the others, bereft of weak adjectives, strong verbs, subordinate word-order, and so much else that was, to Tolkien, both historical and common to the Germanic languages.

The racial boundary between these two language groups was drawn by the Norman Conquest—an event which, as his biographer Humphry Carpenter remarks, Professor Tolkien "regretted as bitterly as if it had been just happened, and which made him himself a linguistic exile, the extreme of utterly rejecting French culture (or, as he would have called it, cooking), and of deliberately wearing dull clothes so as to look more English. The fact that an avowed Englishman was so passionately against the French was a stimulating factor in Tolkien's making his language extraordinary difficult for non-English biographers. How can one possibly understand someone who none-

only felt that way, but was capable also of being reminded of the effect of the Norman Conquest fifty times a week by things which, to an ordinary person, would seem too familiar to be worth remark? To a philologist every commonplace can be revealing. No wonder, then, that even when the events of his life have become clear, the inspiration of Tolkien's fictions should remain half-locked in the imagination of a child who can conceivably be surrounded by other Birmingham children. Welsh con-tracks marked *Sengh-widol* or *Penrhluweather*, but who among them, could perceive in that sign the beauty and anarchy, as yet unknown order.

Inscurability therefore rules, even when Mr Carpenter has completed his painstaking and often moving account of a life which, though long and happy, now seems shot through with pathos, from the first faint, Copperfield-like impression of a child running in fear through long, dark gaols, to dictating a letter to the father he was never to see again, to the last image of a gravestone with on it the names of Tolkien and his wife Edith and their mythical precursors, the ill-starred lovers Eärendil and Lúthien. What this biography brings above all is how well Tolkien fulfilled the *sobriquet* (or nickname) he inherited from his eponymous ancestor, George Tolkien, "foolhardy George". For though opportunities for his temperate valour came rarely to Oxford professors, his whole family history now appears marked by a kind of quixotism: from his mother's decision, though sprung from a long line of West Midland Nonconformists, to turn his mother's own dogged determination to marry against her had been forbidden to see and who was moreover engaged to somebody else, to his own even more dogged persistence in writing fantastic Middle-earth despite the financial disapproval, and equally certain dislike, of his professional colleagues and the learned world he lived in.

Tolkien's everyday environment was ordinary to the point of shabbiness, as Mr Carpenter repeatedly though lightly indicates; and the shabbiness was largely unrolled, for decade on suburban decade. Nevertheless the immediate and unthinking assumption that hobbits and what not are just "escapist" must receive a check from this biography. If the mythographer's spirit was escaping, it was not from comfortable dullness, but from a

pain and fear deep within itself
easily and continually restimulated

A sense of desperation hangs even over the manuscripts that preceded publication of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. How, one wonders, could the author of these books, especially when he must have known that the second one at least was likely to repeat the success of the first, recede so very nearly to the edge of nervous breakdown and dashed at all. Mr Carpenter avoids Freudianisms like "death-wish," guided no doubt by his subject's repeated personal conviction that biographies cannot say anything about authors, but his "death-wish" is the word that leaps to his mind as one reads how Tolkien, having alienated one publisher by a saga of non-delivery and over-complication, set grimly about choking off the next, almost as if he had spent fifteen years' work to go for nothing. To be sure, *The Lord of the Rings* now seems so solid and unified inside its apparatus of maps and pedigrees and appendices that the thought that it might have come out cut, or never at all, or in some wholly different form, is almost a blasphemy. So it is a salutary shock to find Mr Carpenter administrators as he traces the author's almost incredibly unmethodical progress, sending off manuscripts without keeping a copy, keeping two copies but writing in unauthorized alterations on each, introducing innumerable changes in the Prancing Pony Inn in Bree, a queer-looking brown-faced hobbit called "Trotter". But then, the book is "a thing made with hands" after all, and its author a human being, with a guru with a private telephone to the occult, a dependency on libraries, for the cultists, relief from literary critics.

But that is not the whole truth, and Mr. Carpenter explains deliberately and firmly from his first paragraph that the fact is that Tolkein did believe (in a way) that he had a private revelation of truth, and that though his mythology came from his own mind, it was necessarily original, not there. Since he cannot rationalize this idea with talk of Muses or the unconscious, and since his intellectual processes were often spellbindingly evasive (will you read his own commentary around his one article on "Beauty"?), Mr. Carpenter must have done immense amounts of judicious selection to make them as clear as he does. But it is interesting to find that Tolkein had had since childhood a "strong sense of the

an "Atlantis complex"—a recurrent dream about the wave crashing down on a land he came to call Mimeror. Also, his fiction of being an ancient manuscript and editor of an ancient manuscript, of prehistory like the hobbits' Red Book of Westmarch, though on one level a Scribnerian professorial joke, was embedded in his earliest perceptions: He spoke always of finding out the truth behind his own inconscient, his "editor" of rationalizing himself, he thought he could detect traces of antiquity beyond antiquity in scraps of Old English by sheer ancestral memory alone.

No doubt the rationalization we could offer for these beliefs would be that they spring from the immensely fine perceptions of the philologist who has made the philologist know what fitted and what did not without conscious thought because he had been, as Mr Carpenter says, "inside" language. Naturally, he would be able to look back over his own invention and find that it made sense—for instance, that "hobbit" could have descended from Old English **hobbytla*, so that the word *Hobbit* is a pure tautology—loved of philologists because it had supernatural guidance. But Tolkien himself had a Dionysian interpretation: that since we come to know the myths woven by us, though they cannot be made to reflect a splintered fragment of the true light.¹ These are Mr Carpenter's words, not Tolkien's, but they tell us firmly on a yet unpublished poem and on accounts Tolkien gave in a crucial conversation with C. S. Lewis before the latter's conversion. It seems likely that they take us as far as we can get by external means to an understanding of Tolkien's intentions.

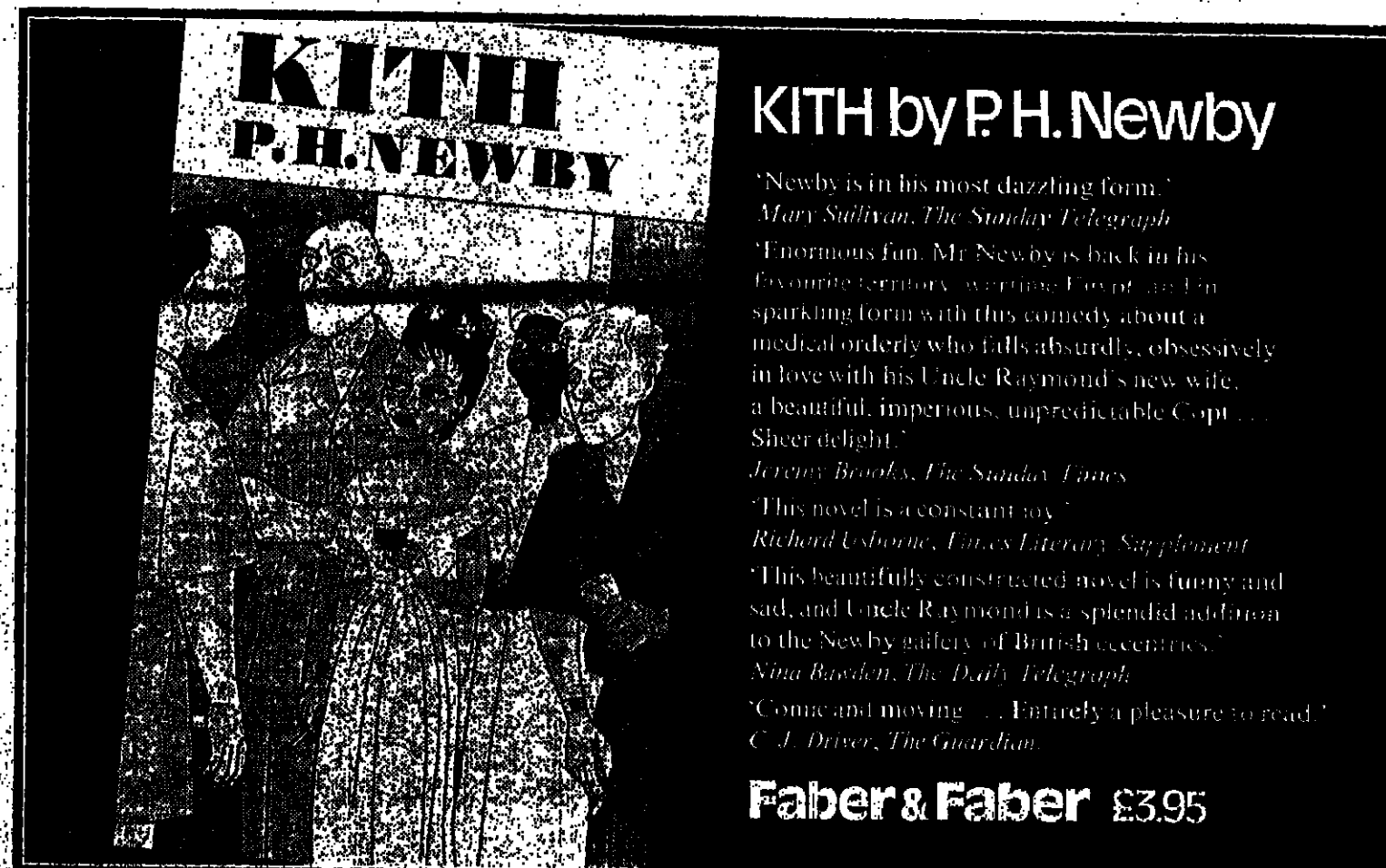
No wonder, then, that he was repelled by notions of allegory within *The Lord of the Rings*. Allegory was a device that Tolkien actually rather liked using, and deployed successfully three or four times in minor works. But he kept it under strict control, knowing it was the plain sense of what he meant, and used it only by way of kind of extended metaphor. To make his mythology as metaphor, however, would be a barbarism. No one could know the plain sense of what he meant, and he would have to underlay it, no one but God. Nevertheless it was a splinter of truth, and he was not averse to it. He was radically different ways of standing. Tolkien's sub-creation underlie the whole of Mr Carpenter's book, and it is a considerable achievement on his part to have

objectively as may be possible, without ever falling back on rattled rationalizations of the latter.

His greatest achievement, though, is to have found his way through tangles of reminiscence, confusion, unordered manuscripts. His book ends with a complete bibliography containing many forgotten published works; his index offers a list of uncollected ones, each threaded into the text, each carefully complicated both by the intensity of the subject's inner life and by the unavailability of his public career. Mr Carpenter retains modest reservations about how much biography can do for literary criticism, but then again literary criticism is enormously assisted by trustworthy biography.

Childhood associations and the Norman Conquest fit together, for instance, in explaining the roots of the Shire and the hobbits. Mr Baggins, that most English of all *downsides*, lives in his burrow in Bag End, and Bag End was the local name of the lane that led to the Worcestershire home of Tolkien's Aunt Jane, to him a haven of peace and ancestral piety. It was also, though, the translation that must have sprung to mind every time Tolkien saw a "dead end" in Oxford, with its hateful official-looking castle and the Normans in our midst, English still oppressed! Calling Bilbo's burrow Bag End was an act of defiance like a Plead Cymru aerosol effacing English signposts. But of course it would be only natural for Bilbo's proud and pretentious relatives to take the name a stage further and insist on calling themselves "The French name left in *The Lord of the Rings*—not plain Baggins, but Sackville-Baggins. Yet even Aunt Lobelia in the end is redeemed. In spite of his personal glooms and sense of national oppression, Tolkien remained evidently a person of immense and self-effacing charity, a writer, in the Dantean sense, of comedy.

The vellum MS known as Colton New A.2., acquired by the British Museum in 1753 from the collection of the seventeenth-century bibliophile Sir Robert Cotton, contains the four finest poems of the fourteenth century: two biblical narratives, an elegy and a chivalric romance. In *The Works of the Gawain-Poet* (1852p), University Press, Mississippi, \$25.00, Charles Moorman has produced the first "collected edition" of *Patience*, *Purity*, *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, complete with the original illustrations. The text has been conservatively edited, and the book is designed both for the scholar and the general reader with no training in Middle English. There is an introduction, full bibliography, detailed notes and glossary.



The steamroller from Birmingham

By Peter Clarke

DENIS JUDD:
Radical Joe
310pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.95.

Joseph Chamberlain failed to reach the top of the greasy pole, but he had a more decisive influence upon the course of British politics than most men who have become Prime Minister. He came from a moderately prosperous London family who settled in Highbury. But he himself made his fortune and his political career in Birmingham, where he was sent as a young man to develop a new American pattern for manufacturing screws. The business boomed; Chamberlain retired from it at forty a wealthy man. He built a huge mansion for himself and, in the name of his son, retained his own "Highbury" in a Birmingham suburb.

In his useful new life of Chamberlain, *Radical Joe*, Denis Judd is rather scathing about the bad taste of "Highbury" and endorses the assessment of Sir Keith Polling that it exemplified "the hideous roomy Victorian Gothic style with a vast hall of arches, stained glass, and inlaid woods". The wheel of fashion has turned again since these words were written thirty years ago. If "Highbury" were still standing today it would obviously be a centre of pilgrimage for the Victorian Society, and there would be an appeal in the offering to save its unique architectural features.

Chamberlain found Birmingham an ideal power base. A city of small workshops, it stood for the characteristically Victorian middle-class radicalism: an ethic of work and self-reliance combined with a hostility to privilege and patronage. Chamberlain made civic pride part of this gospel, propagating an ideal of municipal socialism, premised on the ability of a great democratic city to govern itself with energy and dignity. He helped to give the Liberal party a form of organization which normally invited the participation of all supporters, and in fact produced a highly professional party machine. In this conception, class conflict was not something that occurred between masters and men within Birmingham, but was a challenge to the Birmingham ideal to the point of the landed aristocracy with its headquarters at Westminster. As a Unionist, Chamberlain was also well placed to channel Nonconformist grievances into practical dissent, though he himself seems to have lost his religious faith in 1875 as a result of the death of his second wife. After trying to find an explanation of the "great mystery" he later explained, "I gave it up once for all, satisfied that there was quite enough to occupy me in this life without bothering about what is to come afterwards."

Rarely given to introspection or self-doubt, Chamberlain was the supreme man of action in politics. He astonished over opposition as Mayor of Birmingham, he blandly displaced one of the city's incumbent MPs in 1876. He shouldered his way into the Cabinet in 1880, and in 1885 thrust his "Unreformed Programme" before the electorate in more or less direct challenge to Gladstone. Chamberlain had been prepared to accept Gladstone's return to politics in 1876 on the assumption that he would obviously be temporary. He can continue in public life for very much longer," he assured his radical ally Dilke. Under Gladstone the Liberal party was like a crusade at the bottom and like a club at the top. Chamberlain had a more radical approach to politics, seeking to build up mass political organizations around programmes which incorporated the demands of the membership. He mistrusted Gladstone's approach as a "moderate" and "radical" suggests that Chamberlain remained a radical throughout his political career. This is not a tendentious book and its merits rest largely on the quality of the previous literature, notably the monumental *Life* by J. L. Garvin and Julian Amery, whose six fat volumes would doubtless have been a number of documents in their entirety (which has undoubtedly proved useful for subsequent historians) and even when they quoted selectively they did so at considerable length. The disadvantage of this procedure, of course, is that it interferes with the clear and effective exposition of the authors' own interpretation. It is curious, therefore, that Dr Judd should have taken to this style in the first half of his book; but as soon as he comes to deal with imperial questions, on which much of his previous research has been conducted, the manner becomes brisker and more authoritative. Chamberlain's work as Colonial Secretary from 1895 to 1903 receives here an able appraisal which is well this side of idolatry. In particular, the author casts considerable doubt upon Garvin's confident acquittal of Chamberlain on the charge of complicity in the Jameson Raid.

Chamberlain certainly took a provocative line in dealing with the two South African republics, and upon the educated classes by the present state of society. Cambridge men were even more hostile to Mr Harvie dismisses the Anosties as having little consequential influence. He is probably correct but his conclusion would carry more weight if he had listed the membership of the Anosties in the 1860s as he does that of the Essay and Old Mortality societies in an appendix. (Surely the membership of the Anosties is no longer one of the more profound secrets of the universe.) The names which appear most frequently in his pages are A. V. Dicey, James Bryce, Henry Sidgwick, and T. H. Green. Mr Harvie rightly points out that until very recently historical attention to the Victorian period has concentrated on biographies of individuals. He gives due credit to the pioneering efforts in the application of interdisciplinary techniques to scholars such as G. M. Young, W. L. Burn and G. S. Kitson Clark. Both Noll Annan's *Leslie Stephen, His Life and Thought in Relation to His Time* (1954) and Melvin Richter's *The Politics of Conscience: T. H. Green and His Age* (1964) were attempts to place the individual within a wider group. The impact of the periodical *Victorian Studies* which was founded in 1957, cannot be overestimated. Innumerable scholars have

the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899 was not welcome to him. But though the war saw him at the peak of his power in the Khaki Election of 1900, it also brought accumulating difficulties in train. When, in 1902, the Unionist Government introduced an Education Bill, which was politically sensitive for Nonconformists because it put a charge for church schools on the rates, Chamberlain demanded why the state could not supply the funds instead. "Because your War has made further recourse to State grants impossible," was the answer he received. So the war degraded the shape of the Education Bill; and the widespread unpopularity of the Bill, so it seemed, prompted Chamberlain to try to save the situation by launching an agitation for Tariff Reform. Dr Judd suggests that this iconoclastic challenge to Free Trade was the only available source of revenue for a programme of social reform. It is, of course, true that Chamberlain had committed himself to the provision of old age pensions in the 1890s; but there is little evidence that they were at the outset an end to which Tariff Reform was a means. Part of the difficulty here is that the phrase Tariff Reform came to mean so many different proposals. Imperial preference was at the heart of Chamberlain's scheme; he was inconsistent over whether any revenue raised

should be applied to social reform; and he was initially wary of sullying his Imperial dream with "the squalid argument" for industrial protection.

Chamberlain's health failed him before he could bring the Tariff Reform campaign to a resolution. In 1906, at the age of seventy, he had a stroke from which he never recovered. The last eight years of his life form a moving and pathetic epitaph to the story. Almost his last public act was to urge the House of Lords to reject Lloyd George's Budget in 1909. This made good sense from the point of view of Tariff Reform but it was an ironic valediction for Radical Joe. Perhaps his strongest lifelong claim to a radical influence lies at another level. For what remained consistent from the struggle for Tariff Reform was the Tariff Reform League was an effort at political mobilization of an innovative kind. In the last twenty years of his life he may have been on the right rather than the left. But for him the Conservative appeal to the middle classes was an invocation of the traditional security of undisturbed hierarchy. Instead, Chamberlain was the first right-wing politician in Britain to seek to politicize a mass following and to present policies which enlisted behind them widespread popular grievances against the structure of the logic of this sort of right-wing populism was never pushed through in Britain; but, by the time of Chamberlain's death in 1914, its impact upon British politics could justifiably be termed radical.

Curly's influence on both radicals and idealists without adding that his influence eventually declined decisively?

Chronology presents Mr Harvie with another problem almost impossible to control since most of the issues which concerned the radical class had an annoying propensity to overlap. The second Reform Bill (1860) was obviously influenced by Mr Harvie in his approach.

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The real trouble began when Cook took him back to Tahiti on his third voyage. He protected, harbouring grandiose political ambitions, he had hoped to get Cook's support in a domestic squabble—he came originally from Britain, not the main island, and finally opted to settle on Huahine, another member of the group. Omai was disappointed, since by Cook and by his fellow Tahitians he made enemies among exiles from Bora Bora, unwisely encouraged his shady brother-in-law, and generally provoked his neighbours. Absurd in his homeland as he had never

A Home Ruler might find that his best friend was a Unionist. One might imagine that Gladstone, another democrat, would add to the confusion, people fluctuated and changed their minds with the passing of time. When a few days later the Unionist Government was actually stood for election, they were almost invariably divided by almost unanimous support and patronage. By 1886 a university party and policy were a chimera, and professional politicians dismissed them with good-natured contempt. The young men who had been co-operative for a decade eventually became middle-aged men who found themselves confronted with an external world far too complex and bewildering for them to comprehend, let alone affect.

In 1886 Matthew Arnold reminded them that he had "warned them to shun the hurly-burly of public life for which they were temperamentally unfitted. Better to maintain their dignity within the walls of lost causes."

What has been gained, what has been produced with their help? Really, very much the same sort of thing which was produced without it?

The questions were strictly theoretical.

And what, you may ask, thus spake the Lord? Is My Opinion? For I also have a right to My Opinion. My Opinion is that things will change. What the people have nothing to eat but their words.

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A Tahitian at the court of King Tosh

By Pat Rogers

MICHAEL ALEXANDER:
Omai: 'Noble Savage'
223pp. Collins. £5.95.

The South Sea held more than one lure for Europeans. Men went there as botanists as well as geographers, astronomers as well as adventurers. Trade and empire were often secondary considerations: mythic promise exceeded any obvious colonial potential. Travellers came to the Pacific to test theories and to readmate legends. In the mid-eighteenth century, Polynesia gradually surfaced in the Western consciousness as though Lyonesse had emerged bit by bit from the sea. And from the foam among the atolls rose the figure of the noble savage. In all his pristine impulsibility, not surprisingly a number of natives were hauled back to Europe along with the dilettante trophies and the naturalists' specimens. Omai, who was in England between 1771 and 1776, was the most famous of these human curiosities.

He was not the first. Bougainville had brought back Ahutoru after his visit to Tahiti (which he called La Nouvelle Cythere) in 1768, and the islander had cut a reasonable figure in Parisian society. Cook had planned to bring the youth Odiody with him on his return from his second voyage on the Resolution, long after his sister-ship had carried Omai to England.

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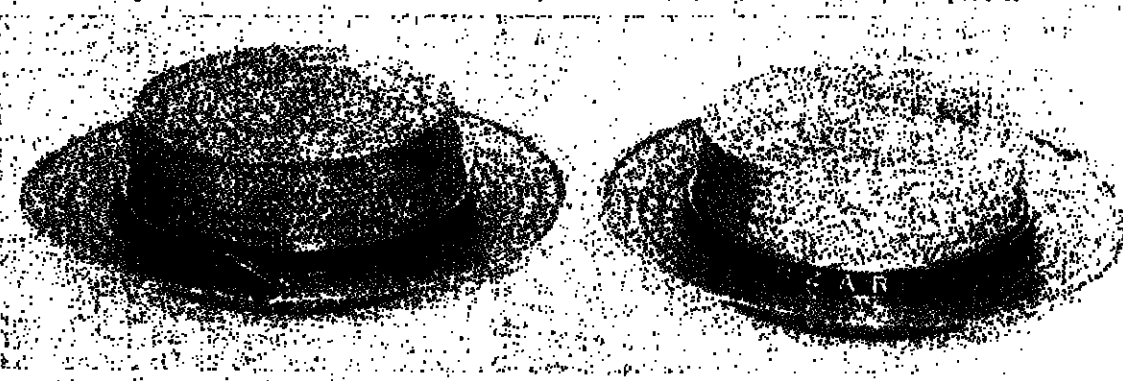
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TLS Commentary

The spoils of Mentmore

The spoliation of Mentmore pre-
ceded the auction. On the day of
the press view earlier this week the
wafery Jacobean pinnacles of the
house had been obscured by an en-
campment of tents which looked
down from upper windows like a range of
diminutive canvas Alps. One of
the tents contained baize-covered
trestle tables for the scribbling of
press despatches; into another
crates of bottled beer were being
constantly unloaded; in the court-
yard of the house a candy-striped
canvas ballroom, fronted with tem-
porary bow-windows, had been
rigged up as a sale-room.
Inside the house, the Victorian
plunder of possessions has spilled
over into a merely chaotic litter:
the staircase, down which Bevis Hil-
ler has imagined Fred Astaire and
Ginger Rogers swanning, is strewn
with soft-drink cartons and big-
bellied saucepans; vacuum-cleaners,
numbered as exhibits on the plan
of the house, open to reveal
mounds of soiled drapery; the guest
rooms are a wasteland of peeling
paint and gilt tat; the pictures have
been discoloured by generations of
grandeur's glare; on the roof tele-
vision aerials, collapsed from the
crockets of the house's skyline, lie
underfoot like driftwood.
The perambulating aesthetes can
be surprised behaving like looters
in a stricken city: in one room a
pile of gun-chewing French dealers
scrambled on all fours beneath a
sofa, probing its horse-hair innards
with pocket torches like impudent
obsequists; or up-ended chairs
and cast them aside with snorts of
derision. It is difficult, as one
watches the carpet-bagging con-
noisseurs pick through the refuse
of Mentmore, not to feel slightly
exhilarated at the dispersal of this
pile of gawgaws and hideous
relics. Most of the objects left
in the house from which the
Tiepolos and Canalettos have long
since disappeared, are coarse and
unlovely embodiments of wealth:
Baron Meyer de Rothschild



Butter dishes by Henry Holland; London, 1875, included in the Mentmore sale.

Fifty years on...

Harold Child wrote about the play-
wright, and drama critic, William
Archer in the TLS of May 12, 1927.
Three of Archer's plays had been
published with an introduction by
Shaw.

The introduction which Mr. Bernard
Shaw has written to this volume
shows Archer as he was; an emo-
tional, sensitive man, with a keen
sense of humour, capable, credi-
tably, through the queer religious his-
tory of Archer's family on both
sides, the shyness which took people
in about his nature, and also the
tragic side of his mind, which he
thought for himself. Walsley
used to say of his old friend that
he started from wrong premises and
reasoned impeccably to wrong con-
clusions. The remark was a charac-
teristic tribute to Archer's power of
reasoning. His intellect was cold,
logical, and pertinacious; and he
left nothing to accident or momen-
tary impulses. Therein lie the
strength and the weakness of his
translations. Mr. Shaw says the op-
posite of the common opinion:
"Archer understood and cared for
Ibsen's imagination. For his socio-
logical views he cared so little
that he regarded them mostly as
absurdities when he was con-
scious of them. Thus, undistracted
by Ibsen's discussions, he went
straight for his poetry."

A third view is conceivable: that
Archer missed, indeed, a great deal
of Ibsen's poetry, but missed also
that in him which might distract

turned acquisition into a labour.
Being rich in itself, a full-time
job, for one must tirelessly be
devising ways of spending money.
What does the man who has every-
thing buy for himself? Rothschild
bought expensive abominations,
objects which had value because
they were beautifully singular. In
the *Spoils of Mentmore* and in his
Murdoch's *Henry and Cato* the dis-
banding of a house's treasures is
an image for the spirit's effort to
disburden itself of material cares;
lamentable though it may be in
other ways, the humbling of men-
more is somehow spiritually satis-
fying.

The house itself belies its own
spaciousness by seeming merely an
agglomeration of odd, mishapen
small areas which, jumbled together,
never manage to be imposing. The
Victorian thought they could make
one big thing from an accumulation
of small things. Their encyclopedic
genre paintings are junkyard
assemblages of the larger they
are the more claustrophobic they
seem. Victorian novels or a poem
like *The Ring and the Book* are
cathedrals composed entirely of
secretive side-chapels or subter-
ranean cells, with no public space
to be shared by a community. Men-
more similarly is all fiddling cran-
nles and hermetic staircases. Out-
size doors lumber open to disclose
not the vast areas they seem to
portend but abstruse bathrooms
in which the tubs are uncomfort-
ably squat but the taps jut out
aggressively like gargoyles. The
chairs cater either for immense
flatulent rumps or plucked flesh-
less thighs, but have no sense of
the comfortable human norm. Fre-
ting after immensity, the house
turns into a series of bizarre minia-
tures. It has the same disconcert-
ing diminution of scale which Col-
ford noted when he called Strawberry
Hill a gothic mousetrap.

Now the Dowager Countess has
fortified herself in a suite in one
of the towers, the house has been

library with the Amber Room: here
there is a wall of curved books
pretending to be books, with titles
of an oppressive incalculability.
Jewellery by Goldsmith, *Sanitary
Reform* by Washington, *The Open-
ing of the Nile* by Waters, *Pedi-
cure* by Foiné, and *Burnett*
on *Indestructible Matter*. Words
and their meanings have been sub-
jected to the same lordly misuse
as those pseudo-owls and pseudo-
hats with which the house is gar-
gled. Sir Francis Watson's valedic-
tory preface to the catalogue says
of the collection "its passing marks
the end of an epoch in the history
of European taste". But that may
not be universally a cause for
regret.

Peter Conrad

Goods for a giggle

Where the Best of Jokes and
Tricks come from (it says)
is Charlton Trading (mail order)
of London. The catalogue is a
Novelty and Magic list lends sub-
stance to the claim. Hilarity comes
cheap: ninety pence will buy you
any fifteen items from Group A—
Jumbo Lips, Dopey Joe Teeth,
Magic Sign, Phantom Nose, or
Rumor Blast thru Finger In-
crutably. Nail three Finger
comes in the classier group B, ten
for £1, along with Dirty Nose
Drugs, Mucky Puss, Card of
Bluebottles, and Krink'n Fun (pre-
sented as an inflatable giant squid
that sinks Japanese submarines)
and causes as much international
merriment as Laughing Gas—
everybody in fit of laughter
(£2.50).

At still higher levels of ear and
sophistication, Snake in a Sweet Tin,
Snake in a Nut Tin, Snake in a
Colony's mustard jar (Snake
springs out when opened) will cost
over a pound each, though Snake
in Camera (like Rat in Perfume
Box) comes much cheaper. If you
are unable to decide between
Drinking Scotsman and Wee Wee
Dial (both trousers down and
watch it happen), and Squirling
Out House Man (Open toilet door
and get a surprise), you can get
the three in a package, though re-
duce devotees of hydraulic funnery
will want to add Sexy Susan
Squirling Novelty.

At a more workaday level, there
are party-time masks etc. (Hairy
Foot, D Rubber Bust, Overhead
Horror Human Masks with Hair)
and conjuring tricks: T9—two darts
multiply into a family, and T22—
miniature time machine effects.
Finally, these amusing little people
will make a film for you on any
subject (includes frog scriptwriting
and choice of cast) for as little as
£18, which should show those Hol-
lywood spendthrifts a thing or two.
Breathless, breathless, News Sheet
brilliantly brings word of many
items "out of stock due to high
seasonal demand". You might have
thought that Electric Shock Light-
ers, Radios and Pin-up Cards kept
in season; nor is it immediately
obvious why one time of year
I humbly conceive to be the more
civilized theatrical methods of to-
day. Though it is amusing to
see Archer, the humble crafts-
man in his workshop, turning out
plays which are indeed better
made in his way than Massinger's
and Middleton's were in the Eliza-
bethan way, the true value and
interest of this parody and this
comedy are not wholly technical.
When we see Archer's *Lidia*
it is better play than Massinger's
The Great Duke of Florence we
mean that the fairies came to bless
the workshop as they blessed the
palace of Theseus. Both plays are
closely joined, more subtly con-
trived, more this, that and the other,
which ultimately means more dra-
matic than their originals; but
though the poetry in *Lidia* is of a
different kind from that in *The
Great Duke of Florence* there is
more of it in Archer's amusing
subtle, tender play than in Mas-
singer's. The discipline of Ibsen
knew something about dramatic
technique which the Elizabethans

Awards of £250 will be made in
June by the Arts Council and the
Provincial Bookellers' Fair As-
sociation for bookbinding and for
first published book of poetry, both
in the British Isles after
1. 1976. Nominations should be
made by May 23. The award is
made by the Arts Council and the
Provincial Bookellers' Fair As-
sociation.

The sergeant-major angel

By Rosemary Dinnage

SIMONE PETREMENT:
Simone Weil
Translated by Raymond Rosenthal
577pp. Mowbrays, £10.

Simone Petrement prefaces her
book with some indications of her
doubts and difficulties about the
undertaking: it is not, she writes,
the closeness of perspective, the
difficulty of discerning her subject's
inner life from his outer events that
distract her, so much as the weight-
iness of any author at all to under-
take the task.

Confronted by so pure a life, one
hesitates to speak of it out of a
fear of not being able to present
it without changing it in terms of
one's own inadequacies. There are
few men or women who would
not feel unworthy to touch
such a life. So the question must
be asked: Who am I that dare to
speak out?

The notion of the sanctity of her
subject is thus clearly in question
from the outset. The recurring
word for Simone Weil's life—pure—
introduced already, and no doubts
permitted that the author's approach
will be to some extent at least
hagiographical. The childhood
stories with which the book opens
are in fact the lives of the saints: the little
girl, when the family moves house,
refuses to move until she is given
a heavier basket than anyone else;
sends her Easter egg to a soldier
at the front; declares that "it
would be better if everyone was
dressed in the same way and for
a soul". "Simone is a saint", a
servant is reported as saying at
some point in her childhood, and
this, Simone Petrement comments,
was the first time the word was
used to describe her.

Mlle Petrement is nevertheless
a painstaking and presumably a
faithful transcriber of all that is
known of her friend's life, and
does not slant her materials or
obtrude her own point of view too
insistently. Indeed, there too
curiously someone has been
described on the jacket as one of
Weil's closest friends, of her own
personal memories or impressions
—which is perhaps a measure of
the isolation of her subject's life.
This makes her biography, but it
does furnish the materials from which
we can form our own judgments
of Simone Weil as a person,
whether saint or not. Let us make
out the case, then, against her
sanctity.

She was born into a non-Orthodox,
gifted and ambitious Jewish family
about a month prematurely, and only nine
months after her brother André—
perhaps not a welcome timing.
Something of the family atmosphere
is suggested in André's remark that
at midnights both parents left what
they thought were the best bits of
food for the other, and so no one
ate what he enjoyed. Weil père
was an anxious and hypersensitive
hygienic, Mlle Weil, overpowered,
says Mlle Petrement, tacitly, in
her "passionate love of her dear
ones and her noble ambitions for
them", reappears frequently in her
daughter's life story, following her
from place to place, "unobtrusively
in slip food into the empty larger,
clothes into the untidy cupboard,
money into the purse depleted by
donations or absent-mindedness
("and the disorder!"). For the last
eight days of my stay here I've been
serving from morning to night, I
get things into a halfway decent
state", runs a letter about her
daughter for Simone was "the
tiresome". In the Weil household
there were no toys or dolls, re-
ports a governess. But where the
two children's education was con-
cerned nothing was spared; and in
its way it was, from all accounts,
a close and devoted family.

Absolute purity, of intellect, habit,
and motive, is the theme to which
Weil returns again and again in
her writings. Purity began in child-
hood, for in the Weil household a
passionate war against germs was
waged; kissing was not allowed for
hygienic reasons, and when a family
friend tried to kiss the child
Simone's hand she is reported to
have been terrified and screamed
for water. At an adult, she could
not bear to be touched, writes Mlle

Pétrement, and "often spoke of her
"disgustiness". If we also cast
a clinically cold eye on the theme
of eating which runs through
Simone Weil's life, from her refusal
to take communion to the headline
in 1943 of "French Professor
Starves Himself to Death", we
notice that she used to joke as
an adult that she had been poisoned
in infancy and that "that's why I
am such a failure", her mother
had fallen ill when Simone was six
months old, and a year of feeding
troubles and debilitation followed,
complete with the doctor's verdict
that the child would not live.

The childish escapades that these
two anxiously nurtured children
chose took curious forms: they used
to knock at the neighbour's door
and beg for food because, they said,
their parents were starving them;
and even more ingeniously, refuse
to wear socks in winter and then
shiver dramatically with cold when
out with their mother in public,
begging for warmer clothes.

André was brilliant, especially in
mathematics, taking the baccalaureat at sixteen. His sister has
recorded her reaction in her
"Spiritual Autobiography":
At fourteen I fell into one of
those fits of bottomless despair
which come with adolescence,
and I seriously thought of dying
because of the mediocrity of my
natural faculties. The exceptional
gifts of my brother, who had a
childhood and youth comparable
to those of Pascal, brought my
own inferiority home to me. . . .
After months of inward darkness,
I suddenly had the overruling
conviction that no matter what
human being, even though prac-
tically devoid of natural faculties,
can penetrate to the kingdom of
truth reserved for genius, if only
he longs for truth and per-
severes in his quest.

This was to remain the focus of
her life—to be a genius at
"truth": a passionate, proud, even
frigidly ambitious decision.
At sixteen Simone Weil entered
the college—the formidable prepara-
tory course for Ecole Normale
examinations in philosophy—at
the Lycée Henri IV, only a
year after it was opened to
girls. The impression she made
on students and teachers is
to appear again and again in the
life story: the Maritain, her
tutor, is said to have nicknamed
her; and later Gustave Thibon
(who came to admire her), was
to say of their first meeting, "I had
the impression of being face to face
with an individual who was radi-
cally foreign to all my ways of
feeling and thinking". He chose, for
one thing, were always atrocious
enough—though they might well
have passed in north Oxford—
to provoke exasperation as much as
hilarity among her compatriots (on
a later occasion both parents left
to stand guard while they were
put her sweater on the right way
round behind the blackboard). At
the Ecole Normale it was proposed
at one time that the annual skit be
built around her, rather than
around the stuff in traditional
fashion. The first impression, says
Mlle Petrement, was "that some
common element of humanity was

missing in her. . . . Many of her
old classmates, when they finally
read her writings, were surprised
to discover that she was so human."
Yet the photographs show a
lively, cheeky child and an adoles-
cent face that, without the glasses,
could as easily have modelled itself
into that of a *grande amoureuse* as
of the archetypal spinster school-
mistress.

She passed well—though as
always at the cost of overwork and
blinding headaches—into the Ecole
Normale, and adequately well out
of it, having earned the nickname
of the Red Virgin for her political
views. Posted to teach in Le Puy,
she involved herself heavily in trade
union work, workers' education, and
in demonstrations—not at the time
as respectable as they are now—
that led to a local uproar. Not the
least of the opposition's case in the
affaire Le Puy seems to have been
that Mlle Weil had been seen
shaking hands with an unemployed
stone-breaker in front of her
lycée; her defendants, on the other
hand, argued for freedom of
opinion for state employees and her
pupils signed a petition in favour
of their teacher. The proletarians
don't need a Joan of Arc. Let her
do her job and stay in her place."
Weil's reaction of a left-wing
colleague; another commented more
charitably, "these are the things
one does when young, and they are
beautiful more than useful". Two
further teaching posts followed
without scandal, though her rela-
tions with colleagues were usually
hostile. Most of her pupils failed
their examinations. The professor,
wrote an inspector summoned
specially to assess her work,
although clearly of intellectual dis-
tinction, spoke "confusedly and
without lifting her eyes from the
paper, while her students 'syringed
her' with questions which they
understood nothing".

Towards the end of her Le Puy
period she went down a cold
and the article she wrote after-
wards shows that her political
thinking was already sensitive: it
is the nature of the work and the
impression she made, that is
oppressive and it is not only
altered by crude political changes.
In view of her inability to com-
promise on any point she was not,
of course, a Communist Party mem-
ber even at this time. Her view
of the USSR was always consistent
—"a bureaucratic, military, and
police dictatorship that has nothing
specialist of communist about it, but
the same".

The need to understand at first
hand how industrial working con-
ditions could be made tolerable was
the theoretical reason for her de-
cision to leave teaching for a period
of manual work in a factory. To
hold political opinions without rele-
vant practical experience was, she
felt, totally hypocritical; that notion
of the Bolshevik leaders had set
foot in a factory or had any direct
experience of the worker's life
made politics "a sinister farce".
Beyond this genuinely felt belief
was a driving need to experience
rather than to comprehend.

"To act as much as I can. And
that is all." So runs one of the
conclusions in the moving and pain-
ful examination of herself that she
wrote in 1942, in the *Waiting for God*.
From now until the outbreak of
the Second World War three years
later, Simone Weil virtually aban-
doned paid work, although there
was a brief period of teaching. But
with each term she renewed her
application for sick leave: her
burns were still uncomfortable, she
suffered from "anaemia and
fatigue", and in particular her
headache had become crippling and
continuous.

Throughout this period she poured
out a stream of writings on current
issues, most of them unsent letters
and unpublished drafts for articles:
on industrial relations, on colonial-
ism, on pacifism. The drift of them
all was inevitably that there is never
a solution for any decision, any
taking sides involves compromise
and "impurity". The Spanish
struggle should be abandoned be-
cause neither side is pure in heart;
Hitler cannot be resisted by the
strength of the state of colonialism in
their hands, religions between labour
and capital are insoluble; "special order,
though necessary, is essentially bad,
whatever kind it may be".
Her own personal state of mind

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Oxford University Press

Goliath

I am part man, part snake,
I lie in your lap like a book,
I can tell a tale of base and divine crevices,
of wordless places, unreachable ledges,
high waterfalls, clouds, dropping down
to swamp lands.
I lingered on the footpaths in gardens
of oleanders and lemon trees,
but my flesh was torn and I tore flesh.
Solo I dangled, whimpered, wept, begged.
I have fathered and mothered, poisoned the nipple,
I offered fruit I would never eat.
I slipped into the furthest valley,
places without ornament:
deserted barracks.
I commanded a territory. I am Goliath,
a child has flung a stone into my head.

Stanley Moss

is revealed in a letter that was probably written during these years: My situation is the following. I am not up to doing anything, whatever it might be, and this goes for all kinds of work. I cannot do any work without a great effort, without the anguish of the swimmer who wonders whether he will have the strength to reach the shore. . . . Since nonetheless I live, reflect, and forward, I become more and more aware of what I carry in my body; and if I must speak to you with complete sincerity, I have the conviction that it contains the germs of great things. This contradiction involves that despair. . . . So then, as you say, there is no way out. Or rather this is the way out: keep on pushing myself as long as it will be possible for me—and when the disability to work will have become too great, then die.

As she abandoned hopes of personal or social solutions she was turning more and more to the *interior* and to Catholicism. It was during these years that she began to experience the mystical intuitions she describes in *Waiting on God*, and to keep her notebooks. The question of baptism into the Church preoccupied her more and more, but she maintained to the end that she must stay outside it. Partly it was a question of intellectual flaws in the Church's teaching. But, more fully, she wrote that "I feel it is not permissible for me. I feel it is necessary and ordained that I should be alone, a stranger and exile in relation to every human circle without exception."

The course of Weil's life after the outbreak of war is probably the best known part of it. André Weil had gone to Scandinavia (for which he was later to be brought to trial). Simone refused to leave Paris, and the desperate Weil parents refused to leave her; she capitulated on the day before the Germans reached the city and, without even returning for luggage, the family managed to get places on a train for Vichy. After Vichy, Marseilles, and the important meeting with Father Perrin, to whom she was to address most of her religious writings: a spell of agricultural work, more successful than the first one in North Africa; and then a flue for New York, from where she believed it would be easy to get to England and be assigned to Resistance work.

During this time she was bombarded by the authorities with two plans which she passionately believed in. In 1939, a plan to parachute troops into Czechoslovakia to foment a Czech uprising (yes, all this "involvement" would die, she wrote, but "they will die with dignity"); later, a plan to parachute a corps of nurses to the front to treat the wounded on the spot. *The sine qua non* of both plans, of course, was that she be included in the mission. The authorities paid her the salary of a captain. But she is mad, is de Gaulle's reported comment. At the end of 1942 she succeeded in getting a passage for England.

She was to live for another nine months. In London she was given an office and the job of reporting on projects for the resistance in the structure of France. In this office she wrote and wrote, sometimes through the night: about justice and charity, the irreducibility of good, the needs of the soul, sin and human obligation, grace, necessity, punishment, responsibility, charity. This was tolerated. But her interminable letters were sent to France for the Resistance; they were not so independent, treated by her busy superiors as they were by the fact that she would not be captured, and she would not be killed. Others were sent to the United States and even, indeed, by accident, to home as they came in the hands of the British. The letters to her parents, however, were not going to be sent to France. She fell ill. An early diagnosis of tuberculosis was diagnosed, and she was taken to hospital. She grew worse and when she died the lung operation prescribed by the most difficult patient he had ever had, the doctor commented: "a sanatorium. She died there within a month."

The coroner's verdict: "the deceased died of heart failure by refusing to eat. While the balance of her mind was disturbed"—was both true and not true. From the time that she left France she had indulged her disinclination to eat by refusing to take more than the French ration, would be applying

at home. "To Simone, eating seemed a base and disgusting function," recalls her friend Bercher; she had been delighted when he told her about the custom of the high-ranking animal and about a nun who had lived for years on nothing but the eucharist—but "when I told these stories to Simone . . . I had the sensation that I was both giving her pleasure and doing her harm. That was how it was with this creature who was at war with her own life." At the sanatorium she would take nothing with milk in it, and at the end almost nothing at all. Yet she wanted food. Before dying she asked for a *bricolage*, and for *pommes moutarde* prepared by a French cook. But in England in 1943 these were not available—more than the absolutely disinterested political programme, the perfection of love, and the perfection of rational religious dogma had been.

Three things stand out from Weil's life story. One is that although, as Mlle Pétrement sums up, she never ceased to fight oppression, always obstinately looked for truth, loved beauty and was generous with her time, money and effort; although a number of people recognized and appreciated her quality; yet she was also continually ridiculous, and left confusion and exasperation everywhere behind her. Out for a walk with an acquaintance, she found a peasant ploughing and insisted on taking a turn; she overturned it at once, much to the owner's fury. In Marseilles, given Resistance pamphlets to distribute, she dropped the lot in the street, from the car. In the last days of her life, she was unable to relate to every human circle without exception.

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made it easy to hurt me through my friendship, have amused myself by doing so. . . . They did not behave like this from malice, but as a result of the well-known phenomenon which makes hens rush upon one of their number if it is wounded, attacking and pecking it. "I am a badly cut-off piece of God," she said in hospital; and we think of Kierkegaard's despair at willing to be oneself. . . . of the being who feels he is God's slip of the pen and in a rage against the author will not be corrected or comforted; and even, to be harsh, of Nietzsche's "meaning of conspiracies, the conspiracy of those who suffer against those who succeed." . . . in this swamp-land of self-contempt, every swampland weed flourishes, and all so small, so secret, so dishonest, and so sweetly rotten."

Yet her passion, her intellectual heresy, as Bercher pointed out to her, was her insistence on "purity": the great heresy of the Catholic, whom she was so much admired, with their callous, their separatism, their belief that the material world was hell. The desire for purity is the source of all heresies, he told her: "Remember the Catholics! Man is not pure but a 'clay'." And the sinner must sink a bit at the least. "If truth were not as pure and unadulterated as her brother's mathematics she was unsatisfied: 'The straight line is what I draw when I am thinking of the purely straight. Truth is what I think. . . . when desiring the pure truth.' To accept and eat the eucharist would have had something of impurity in it."

Man's great affliction, which begins with infancy and accompanies him till death, is that looking and eating are different things. Eternal beatitude (cf. the myth in *Phaedrus*) is a state where to look is to eat. This is to want everything, truly to need to have one's cake and eat it. If all this seems a hard indictment it is only to say that, after all, Weil was a human being and not a saint. Except for those with a literal interest in canonization, her faultiness should be of no more importance to the end than the fact that, however good a full chamber pot, under the least of that Johnson had a compulsion to collect orange peel. For the best of her writing on the spiritual life does indeed have the quality of a straight line, and, as a result, of being inhumanly clear, of attempting to live out her knowledge.

She wanted to be flexible to every movement of the divine will (but) could not bear the course of events or the kindness of her friends changing by one inch the position of the stakes with which her own will had marked out her path of immolation. And the way she mounted guard around her void still paid witness to a terrible preoccupation with herself. . . . her ego, as it were, was like a word that she may perhaps have succeeded in eliminating, but that was still underlined.

This was Gustave Thibon's summing-up. Yet from her own words we see that there was not one of the pitfalls she fell into that she did not in theory know about. "We must not even become attached to our own writing," she wrote; and "imitation of the solitude of God, that is the worst form of idolatry." "The pleasures of the senses" she knew, "are everything that is innocent . . . so long as the soul does not lose itself by filling up a void." Redemption is to be found by an act of attention and a sort "not by muscular efforts of the will," she will cannot produce any good in the soul.

We seldom have the chance to see so distinctly laid out the special dangers of the spiritual life, the testing of the thought for the deed, the hair's breadth between pride and humility. Weil's sad, stubborn life was in fact a triumph; for in some of her writing she did achieve the "intelligent" lucidity she wanted, and in a manner that could not have been done by any other writer to compromise with the world and common sense. But as a person rather than a writer we can feel and feel her, for although she knew that there is only one suit: it is capacity to feed upon life; it is again, could not act on her knowledge. Her cherished copy of Bercher's poem "Love" is reproduced here, written out with evident care in a regular, childish hand. Love made the welcome, not my own love back," it begins, and ends "So I fold it and eat." But she feared to eat.

Nothing better enables me to measure the breadth of your charity than the fact that you have not the same motives as I have myself . . . for feeling hated and repulsion towards me. But all this is to feel that the balance with me can only be a balance of love. . . . I am not going to be sent to France for the Resistance; they were not so independent, treated by her busy superiors as they were by the fact that she would not be captured, and she would not be killed. Others were sent to the United States and even, indeed, by accident, to home as they came in the hands of the British. The letters to her parents, however, were not going to be sent to France. She fell ill. An early diagnosis of tuberculosis was diagnosed, and she was taken to hospital. She grew worse and when she died the lung operation prescribed by the most difficult patient he had ever had, the doctor commented: "a sanatorium. She died there within a month."

Corina Nicolescu

As someone with only a limited knowledge of Romania I am not competent to write a formal obituary of the distinguished artist, Dr Corina Nicolescu, who was killed in the recent earthquake in Bucharest, but at least something of her contribution to European art-history should be made public, however inadequately.

Corina Nicolescu, who spoke French, Italian and German fluently and read English, was internationally respected not only as a specialist on the influence of Byzantine art on the early arts of Romania but also as an authority on those late medieval and Renaissance silks which reached Romania (the pivotal centre of European and Oriental trade) from Italy and Turkey, as well as on the impressive large-scale silk embroideries of the early sixteenth century which are unique to Romania. These silks, which are of two kinds, the first those which were presented to churches as votive memorials to the dead and which portrayed them in full-length and almost life-size, crowned or bearded and clothed in life in brocades fitting to their princely rank, meticulously copied in French and Russian are indeed, in an English edition would be invaluable but perhaps too much to hope for.

In 1970 her short book on courtly dress in the Romanian principalities was published simultaneously with her much longer history of the subject. This splendidly produced publication by the Editura Stiintifica sets a standard which would be almost impossible to meet in England today. Its summaries in French and Russian are indeed, in an English edition would be invaluable but perhaps too much to hope for.

The following year, 1971, Corina Nicolescu, together with two colleagues, was responsible for the exhibition "Cultura Bizantina" in Bucharest, held in the XIVth Congress of Byzantine Studies which took place there in September that year. It was accompanied by an excellent catalogue of the north of Europe, much larger, appear coarse and inexpressive.

As keeper of the important department of early Romanian art in Bucharest, Dr Nicolescu also made a study of the actual gown worn by the very few very few princes and their wives who would have commissioned the embroidery, and of whom she also wrote when they appear as donors in fresco paintings inside and on the outside walls of the famous painted Moldavian monastic churches. A number of these rich garments have survived as altar-frontals, bequeathed for this purpose by their

Stella Mary Newton

Information, please

Matthew Arnold: *The Poems* edited by Kenneth Allott, any corrections or amendments, for a new edition.

Miriam Allott, Modern Languages Building, Chatham Street, Liverpool L69 3BX.

Thomas Arnold Jnr (1823-1900): whereabouts of his professional papers, for a study of literary historiography.

Arthur J. Carr, 28 Tice Street, London SW9 4JA.

Charles Francis Atkinson, translator into English of Spengler's *Decline of the West* (any information about him).

L. J. Halle, 18 Chemin de Botterol, CH-1222 Vésenaz, Switzerland.

The Black Prince, c. 1399: name of author and the titles of her other works.

N. J. B. Plomley, Department of History, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria 3052, Australia.

E. M. Forster: whereabouts of any photographs of him, for an illustrated study.

Francis King, 19 Gordon Place, London W8 4JE.

Edward Lear: whereabouts of any letters from him, to members of the Tennyson family, for an edition.

Adrian Henry Elkins, 101 Morrell Avenue, Oxford.

Gilles Personne de Roberval (1602-75), Professor of Mathematics at the Collège de France: whereabouts outside France of manuscripts by or relating to him, also whereabouts of any letters or editions of his printed works.

Alan Gubney, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, The Queen's University of Belfast, Belfast BT7 1NN, Northern Ireland.

Eric R. Spencer (1897-1917), Daily Express journalist and fiction writer of the 1920s and 1930s: whereabouts of copies of his books, also letters, photographs or personal accounts.

Ronald Rumpsey, Department of English, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

Wols, also known as Wolfgang Schulz (1913-1951), German émigré painter: whereabouts of any unpublished material about him, or any personal memories.

Peter Ish, 68 Bridge Lane, Hethen Bridge, West Yorkshire.

Paul Shelving: whereabouts of any sketches, photographs or reproductions of his for two of Sir Larry Jackson's Malvern Festival productions, *Hick-Scorner* (1934) and *The Interlude of Youth* (1934).

Lat Langavshire, 28 Sarah Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M8X 1R5, Canada.

Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall (Rossetti): whereabouts of any unpublished information and also whereabouts of the daguerotype of her.

Mary Platt, 40 Third Cross Road, Twickenham, Middlesex.

Smiley, an exponent of novelists belonging to old Smiley residents of the Smiley of Smiley Town (1880-1947).

Pamela Kanwar, Aberfoyle Cottage, Lakkar Bazar, Simla 171001, Himachal Pradesh, India.

Allen Upward (1863-1926): whereabouts of any letters, manuscripts, photographs, newscuttings or personal recollections.

Michael Sheldon, The Park, Huggate, London W4.

To the Editor

Book Prices

Sir,—I am amazed at the uninformed statements made by a presumably responsible academic (Philip Brockbank, May 6), accusing publishers of overpricing. Production costs of books have trebled in four years, and it is now virtually impossible to publish a hardback book at £2.50 or £3 as Mr Brockbank suggests, even with a substantial print quantity. Library cut-backs and general recession have reduced sales, thus further increasing the unit price. Publishers are now pricing books realistically as none of us can afford to subsidise some books out of the profit of others.

I suggest Mr Brockbank works for a while in publishing, and if, as a result, he can solve our problems publishers will assuredly compete for his services.

PETER OWEN, Peter Owen Ltd, Publishers, 20 Holland Park Avenue, London W2 4QU.

'Kith'

Sir,—Richard Osborne's memory serves well in his review of P. H. Newby's *Kith* (April 29). I was, I think, one of the few who, in 1954, saw the original, a one-time world heavy-weight boxing champion, was indeed in the German airborne invasion of Crete. He was in the 1st Battalion, 3rd Parachute Regiment, which landed behind the main Alitikon, near the Frigate Valley, took the prison, and thereafter had such a busy day's fighting that when the last of numerous attacks upon them by Greek units was called off a little before dawn on the following morning, the whole battalion had fewer than a hundred rounds of ammunition. Their commander, Captain von der Heydt, told me that their only casualty in the landing was Schmeling, the champion of a broken leg. The complaint was eventually withdrawn.

CHRISTOPHER MACLEHOSE, Chatto and Windus, 40-42 William IV Street, London, WC2.

James Joyce and Moses Dlugacz

Sir,—In his review of John Gervin's *James Joyce's Disunited Kingdom* (February 18), J. S. Atherton, referring to the author's identification of the Jewish pork-butcher, Dlugacz, adds some new facts about him by relying on an interview given by Maria Jolas to Richard M. Kalin at the fourth Joyce Symposium in Dublin in 1973 and reported in the *James Joyce Quarterly*, Volume 2 No 2, 1974.

In discussing Joyce's conversation with John P. Byrne about the baptism of his grandson, whose mother was Jewish, Richard M. Kalin stated that I pointed out in my book *The Jews of Ireland*, published in Jerusalem in 1972, that Joyce had concluded with the Jewish community in Dublin through Byrne who was on friendly terms with several Dublin Jews. Maria Jolas replied that I also pointed out that Joyce became friends with a young, kosher butcher in Trieste who had trained for the rabbinate and that he was interested to compare with him the elements of similarity and dissimilarity between preparing to be a priest and preparing to be a rabbi.

In my meeting with Maria Jolas in Paris in December 1966 I told her of my discovery of the identity of Moses Dlugacz through chance meeting with his daughter, resident in Haifa, but Maria Jolas's

memory failed her when she stated that Dlugacz was a kosher butcher in Trieste. In my book I pointed out that Dlugacz became Joyce's pupil in English on his appointment in 1912 to the post of chief cashier in the local Cunard Line office. The English lessons continued till the outbreak of the First World War, when the English shipping office had to close down. During the war years Dlugacz traded, not as a kosher butcher, but as a provision merchant with a small store in Via Torbiana and, in a small way, he was a supplier of cheese and meat products to the Austrian army fighting on the Austro-Italian front along the Isonzo River.

The son and grandson of Ukrainian rabbis, Dlugacz had a strict Orthodox upbringing and in his fifteenth year was granted a rabbinical diploma dated 21 Sivan (June), 1898, now in my possession. He never served in any community as a rabbi. At the age of eighteen he ran away from home, as his parents were opposed to his studying secular subjects, and moved to Tarnopol in Poland where he prepared himself for the external matriculation in the classical trend. His major paper on matriculating was "Faust in World Literature." From Tarnopol he went to Vienna and later settled in Trieste where he became an active Zionist. There is no basis for Maria Jolas's statement in the Dublin interview that Joyce discussed with Dlugacz the elements of similarity and dissimilarity between preparing for the priesthood and the rabbinate.

LOUIS HYMAN, 18 Elhaman Street, Mount Carmel, Haifa.

Charles Williams

Sir,—Alastair Fowler says of Charles Williams (April 29): "He did not reach success as a poet, or as a dramatist; nor, perhaps, as a critic, or literary historian or biographer—or even, quite, as a novelist. . . . He was, I suppose, a visionary and an imaginary thinker. Certainly when I was a student his poetry seemed to me one of the very few things that mattered."

Exactly, but what has happened to Mr Fowler since he was a student? I believe it can be shown, and hope to do so myself, that Williams was an intensely original, yet lunatically orthodox, theologian. (He would have appreciated, or paradoxically, it is this gift which spilled into all the rest of his work (and his life), giving it a strangely illuminating quality.

TIM BEAUMONT, 1 Hampstead Square, London NW3.

Among this week's contributors

ALAN BELI is working on the life and letters of Sydney Smith.

RUTH BRANDON'S *Singer and the Sewing Machine* was published earlier this month.

ARTHUR CALDER-MARSHALL's recent book, *Leont Blaphemous and Obscene, 1972*, and *The Grand Century of the Lady*, 1976.

PETER CLARK is the author of *Lancashire and the New Liberalism*, 1971.

B. A. L. CRANSTONE is Curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.

GROFFREY DIMBLEBY is the author of *Plants and Archaeology*, 1977.

ERNEST GALLNER's books include *The Devil in Modern Philosophy*, 1974, and *Legitimation of Relief*, 1975.

THYLLIS GROSSKOWTH is the author of *John Addington Symonds*, 1964.

STUART HAMPBURY's books include *Freedom of the Individual*, 1965, and *Freedom of Mind and other essays*, 1971.

GILES HUBERT is a member of the Blackfriars Community, Oxford.

MICHAEL HUNT'S *John Aubrey and the Realm of Learning* was published in 1976.

DAVID IRWIN is co-author (with Francis Irwin) of *Scottish Painters*, 1975.

DENNIS JOHNSTON'S *Dramatic Works*, Volume 1 will be published shortly.

JOHN KENYON is the author of *The Popish Plot*, 1972.

L'humour

Sir,—In his friendly review of my *The World of Alphonse Allais* (May 6), Richard Mayne seems to spend a disproportionate amount of time proving that Allais's humour did have a French tradition to link up to (although he admits that Allais is a rare native example), and disputing my view for the national stereotypes of French wit and English humour. I note, though, that in their November 1976, publisher's list, editions Seghers introduce a new humour series with the words: "Le croira-t-on? Les Français n'aiment pas rire, si l'on en juge par les échecs consécutifs de nos collections d'humour. C'est donc une gageure que nous tentons."

GILBERT BENNETT, Llys-y-Môr, 23 Heatherdale Close, Southgate, Swansea SA3 2DE.

MILES KINGTON, Pinch, 23-27 Tudor Street, London EC4Y 0HR.

Dylan Thomas's Father

Sir,—I do not wish to enter the lists to challenge or defend assessments of the life and works of Dylan Thomas. However, the recent publication of two books about him has led reviewers to apply to his father, D. J. Thomas, the familiar words "bitter", "embittered", "disappointed" and furthermore to suggest that he was a schoolmaster who was "admired and feared". It is often suggested that he felt his academic ability had not been sufficiently recognized and sometimes hinted that he harboured a grievance against one particular individual whose professional attainment was higher. I write in case the constant repetition of these opinions adds to the force of truth.

Let me say at once this is not the picture I have of him. None of this acid spilled over into his teaching life nor, I believe, into his relationship with his son.

D. J. Thomas taught me English for two years at the Swansea Grammar School and for me opened magic cases on "a fairy land forlorn". In the classroom he was precise and encouraged precision, he detected talent, spent much of his personal time fostering the work of potential writers, without, however, neglecting less responsive pupils.

His sarcasm—rarely used—was reserved for boys who were vulgar, indelicate or insensitive. By no boy was he feared; yet there were many of these who, in his hands, were transformed into a school where numbers of masters hit pupils fiercely with hand or fist, and employed the cane, he never used physical violence of any kind on them.

He had subsequent dealings with him on a more personal level for a further two or more years when he appointed me as a sub-editor and then an editor of the school magazine. I visited his home on a number of occasions where he received me courteously and kindly. It was

DAVID HUNT, Old Place, East Wing, Lindfield, Sussex RH16 2HU.

Jesus

Sir,—Paul Johnson writes (April 18) that the murder of Jesus was the only recorded occasion on which Sadducees, Pharisees and the Roman authorities acted together, with the approval of the Jerusalem mob.

Mr Johnson expresses a traditional view which has been attacked by Christian and Jewish scholars from the eighteenth century to the present. The twentieth-century S. G. F. Brandon and Paul Winter. The work of these scholars has shown that the Jews who collaborated with the Romans in the trial and execution of Jesus were not the Sadducees, but the Pharisees, two tiny minorities. The Herodians were purely political figures who lived a Roman type of life. The Sadducees were a religious group, led by the High Priest, who were opposed to any official appointment by the Romans, and was in no sense the spiritual leader of the Jews as a whole.

The Pharisees had no reason to oppose Jesus, as his Sabbath-healing activities were not contrary to Pharisaic Judaism. Jesus's claim to be Messiah, who was himself a Pharisee, there were many other Messianic figures in the period, and not one of them was prosecuted for blasphemy. Ample information on Pharisaism is available from the Talmud, and Jesus's teaching is clearly in accord with the teaching of Pharisaism; so much so that Jesus must be regarded as a Pharisee himself. Jesus never claimed to be God; only the Fourth Gospel, the latest and least authentic of Jesus's times, portrays the Jews as shocked by sayings of Jesus which, in reality, they would have regarded as a familiar part of their spiritual heritage, e.g. the high valuation of repentant sinners and the call to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

HYAM MACCOBY, Leo Baeck College, 33 Seymour Place, London, W1.

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Mowbrays

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obvious to me that the atmosphere of his home was relaxed and tolerant, and that his sons' development, I know, too, that if D.J.'s colleagues were critical of Dylan's slowness in school subjects other than English, he would say gently: "Leave him alone; he has other plans."

It may be argued that my point of view is personal and subjective and "coloured" by the passage of forty-five years. Perhaps so. But a check with some of the survivors of those classes taught by D.J. reveals a similar affectionate feeling for him far different from the verdicts of writers based on hearsay.

GILBERT BENNETT, Llys-y-Môr, 23 Heatherdale Close, Southgate, Swansea SA3 2DE.

MILES KINGTON, Pinch, 23-27 Tudor Street, London EC4Y 0HR.

Broken Ciphers

Sir,—James Thrisk (Letters, April 22) is quite right in pointing out that the Pearl Harbor inquiry revealed in 1945 that the British had been able to read both German and Japanese machine ciphers; but I think he will agree that very little notice was paid to this revelation except by those who had been in the secret. Perhaps stops were taken by the British security apparatus to conceal the fact that the real free-for-all only started with the publication in 1974 of *The Ultra Secret*.

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One of This Century's Most Outstanding Intellectuals

Simone Weil

What that personality did matter. What that personality was does not matter. Man's job is to leave the dead alone.

To see ourselves as others see us

By David Pocock

ALAN CRICK:
Explorations in Language and Meaning
212pp. Malmby Press. £6.95.

Explorations in Language and Meaning is an important and timely book and because the timelessness contributes so much to the importance I shall have to put it in the perspective of the recent history of social anthropology in this country. The book derives from a doctoral thesis submitted at Oxford in 1974. In 1973 the TLS devoted the greater part of its issue of July 6 to the contemporary state of social anthropology. In his introductory article the late E. E. Evans-Pritchard wrote:

Functionalism, like Evolutionism before it, provided some sort of methodological coherence and direction to anthropology. . . . With its decline it cannot be said that any clearly stated and defined unitary methodological approach has taken its place. The consequence is that anthropology . . . is disintegrating . . . into a series of isolated, unconnected studies.

Edmund Leach also presented his history of the subject and in his conclusion claimed that "social anthropologists are engaged in establishing a methodology for the translation of cultural language". On July 6 the Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth had entered into the third day of a special decennial conference at St John's College, Oxford, and the proceedings were devoted to confirm Evans-Pritchard's diagnosis; there was no evidence that the many new groups of sub-disciplines recognized the common task spelt out by Professor Leach.

Malcolm Crick, who was presumably working on his thesis at this time, takes this condition of disunity for granted but, unlike those who think that the new diversity is a natural and welcome development, he has reservations, which I share. One had hoped that the mood of introspection and concern with epistemology which was in vogue in the 1960s would result in a more educated, more philosophically sensitive anthropology which could both contain the emerging specialisms and justify the emergence of the subject in the university curriculum as an education for life no longer exclusively a postgraduate and professional concern. What appears to have been generated, however, is a mass of new fields of interest in which the demand for more research has been met by more problems which are ultimately myopic ones.

From tree to transport

By B. A. L. Cranstone

ELSDON BEST:
The Maori Canoe
452pp. Wellington, NZ: Government Printer, £17.50.

Reading Best's works on many aspects of traditional Maori culture will return one to the values of the 1950s. Based on his long experience of observation of the Maori, he has gathered a mass of information from Maori elders, sources no longer available. The best known is probably The Maori, two volumes covering the history and culture of the Maori. For some reason one of the two volumes, absent even from several specialist libraries in this country, has been The Maori Canoe, published in 1922 and now reprinted.

This is still the most complete account of the Maori canoe from the selection and felling of the tree to the final launch and the launching and landing of the canoe. It is a book which has been rarely recorded in the history of the Maori. It is a book which has been rarely recorded in the history of the Maori. It is a book which has been rarely recorded in the history of the Maori.

Dr Crick's subtitle could mislead potential readers into supposing that yet another new branch of the discipline is being proposed but the author is quite clear on this point.

The label "semantic anthropology" . . . must not be interpreted as the name of a new school or as the announcement of a new subdiscipline. It refers only to an awareness that anthropology is necessarily a semantic inquiry. Indeed, since the word "anthropology" is legitimately used to describe any reflection by human beings on themselves, it would be appropriate to regard "semantic anthropology" as a style of investigation based upon a certain conception of what it is to be a human being. . . .

The closing lines of the book are more bold:

Even those who are most hostile to the spirit which animates semantic anthropology can disagree with it only by using the semantic powers to construct an opposed system. In so doing they are embraced by its scope and interests.

That "a certain conception of what it is to be a human being" is the conception of the human being as meaning maker, as a fundamental semantic creature. Dr Crick's semantic powers to construct an opposed system, in so doing they are embraced by its scope and interests.

It is interesting to compare his position with that of Professor Leach who, in his introduction to the book, entitled "Ourselves and Others" and also concluded with the emphasis on translation; Leach's view of translation seems to be the commonsense one: "translation is difficult. . . . And yet we know that for practical purposes a tolerably satisfactory translation is always possible". Dr Crick goes beyond this in pointing out that translation transcends. This is no novelty in itself, but he spells out its significance for anthropologists explicitly and implicitly. His explication rests on an earlier critique of the tendency, anthropologists have to, to privilege their own conceptual systems and by so doing generate false oppositions—literal/analytic, scientific/religious and the like—all of which generate false problems and can all be subsumed under the opposition of them with which anthropology begins.

Translation into a "privileged language" clearly establishes the translation as superior to the original and one of the chief accidents that we try to correct by being as objective as we can, by quantifying when we can, and by using cameras and tape-recorders; on the contrary this recognition obliges the anthropologist to widen the scope of his inquiry to include the culture which he is perambulating. There is interaction with another culture.

In Dr Crick's words:

The "we" . . . has always had an implicit presence in anthropological writings. . . . Semantic anthropology requires this "presence" to be made explicit.

The anthropologist deceives himself if he imagines, as an earlier generation did, that having really lived in alien culture and really spoken an alien language, he then returned home to translate all this experience into his own language as though he had for a time abandoned his historical being. To appreciate the falsity of this view, and the inevitability of the alternative one, is to take very seriously Dr Crick's suggestion that a greater knowledge of the conceptual structures of our own society than most anthropologists include in their training, and a greater familiarity with the complex resources of our own language, should probably receive as much emphasis as the still essential linguistic and other skills required in fieldwork; certainly they should receive more attention in the teaching of anthropology than they do.

A profounder implication in this final chapter emerges from the section "Ourselves and Others". In which Dr Crick explores the ground which makes translation possible and justifies a notion central to his thought, that translation is not merely one of the things that anthropologists do, but the whole of what they do.

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He seems to suggest initially a return to romantic humanism. In fact, it is a more rigorous form, when he says that the common ground upon which the act of translation can begin might be established by an exploration of "our own conceptual structures with notions that are thought to constitute another kind of reality". However he moves on to observe that

we cannot settle the issue of whether or not there are people with radically different ways of thinking since the very act of producing a translation places alien utterances into our own mould . . . we either translate according to our principles, or we leave untranslated.

An impasse? The way out is indicated by the appreciation that as we ourselves change in time so we construct images of the other from which we advance our understanding of ourselves.

There is throughout the book a recognition that the anthropologist, or "we", constitutes also an object. In other words there can be a multiplicity of anthropologies:

Different cultures characterize the diversities and the unifying features differently, and over time the images of what is universal and what separates one culture from another change . . . so there can be no final definition of the relation between "ourselves" and "others". The real meaning of the relation is thus in all its variations.

From this it follows inevitably that part of the vocation of anthropology is to stimulate the emergence of independent anthropologies in those cultures which have been the objects of our inquiries; anthropologies which are not outposts of intellectual colonialism but

Wali's-eye view

By André Singer

AKHAR S. AHMED:
Millennium and Charisma among Pathans
A Critical Essay in Social Anthropology
173pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £4.95.

With a gleeful rub of his hands, and armed with an impressively incomprehensible terminology, Akhtar Ahmed has here attempted a tilt at some anthropological potentes. The main recipient of the criticism implicit in the subtitle of his book is Gertrude Barz, and the source is Barz's early study Political Leadership among Swat Pathans. Ahmed's critique is on two levels, the first and the most valuable, centring on the subject-matter and quality of the source material. The second, a theoretical approach to the material and its wider anthropological application.

It has long been a criticism of Barz that his interests lie more in the construction of models of society with cross-cultural pertinence than in any particular collection of field data, and that, as a result, certain essential aspects of the society in question are neglected. Ahmed's well-known knowledge of Pathan society (he is himself a Pathan) and his administrative role in tribal affairs in Pakistan have placed him in a position to offer the reader with a far better account of Swat Pathan society than Barz could offer nine months of study. In 1954, much of Mr Ahmed's material is still to come, but what he provides in this work is a welcome addition to the limited available data; there are, after all, as Mr Ahmed tells us, over fifteen million people in Pathan tribal society in Pakistan alone; making them one of the largest tribal groups to be found anywhere in the world.

But Mr Ahmed's book cannot be considered an ethnography, and nor is it meant to be. It is essentially an essay on the development of a political hierarchy. In this sense, it is a study of the political structure of Pathan society.

independent through a process of examining our observations in the light of their knowledge of us, parallel to our critique of our observations on them in the light of our own self-knowledge.

This book makes very important challenges to contemporary anthropology. At the very least it provides, as no other work in recent years has done, a framework for debate and a hope of coherence. I have by no means done justice to the careful manner in which the argument is built up in the successive chapters.

The book is divided into two sections: the first deals with three ways in which anthropology and language have been related, and focuses upon Max Müller, Lévi-Strauss, and the American linguistic anthropologists; the second section Dr Crick describes as "Explorations in Semantic Anthropology": these are "Ordinary Language and Human Action", which includes among other things a dismissal of the idea that one can hope to find a "Rationality" which is not a play of dissimulation of the concept.

"Understanding Conceptual Structures", which concentrates on the semantic aspect of science, on the Freudian conceptual system, and on the significance of alternative views of alchemy as proto-science and as symbolic statements; "The Translation of Cultures" is the final chapter.

I have recommended that the introduction and the final chapter be read first so that the reader can get his bearings, but the argument evolves continuously through various critiques and explorations and they cannot be dispensed with. The book is clearly polemical and inspired by a dedication to the subject amounting to passion, but the polemic is controlled by wit and a cool friendly tone, the passion disciplined by an insistence on meticulously careful exposition.

Mr Ahmed's words, in spontaneous and informal style, short-lived native reaction to economic or political stimulus, expressed through the presence of foreign troops and administration. In the Pathan instance the reaction was the tribal uprisings against the British. Ahmed's words, in spontaneous and informal style, short-lived native reaction to economic or political stimulus, expressed through the presence of foreign troops and administration. In the Pathan instance the reaction was the tribal uprisings against the British.

Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant are given parallel biographical coverage for their early lives—sometimes rather anachronistic, but quite thorough. Their careers are always distinguished from each other, although there is much inevitable overlap, particularly in their subject-matter, where their concentration on the same landscapes, interiors and models often leads to confusion. Mr Shone makes a good distinction between their approaches to small-scale decorative work in pottery and book-jacket design.

Vanessa Bell does not have that large, luminous conception of composition which is Duncan Grant's. But she can be extraordinarily resourceful with a few basic forms when designing a fabric or painting a tile, whereas Duncan is inclined to be over-elaborate. In the work of a larger scale, he is exuberant, often fantastic, and attempts more ambitious schemes. She is, altogether, graver, less restless, less concerned with her subject matter.

Indeed their decorative work provides some of the best material in the book, as well as some of the most unfamiliar, with ample illustrations to show its range.

Vanessa Bell's New English background and the formative French and Italian influences on Duncan Grant's work are well discussed. He was an apt pupil falling under many influences; indeed so apt and fluent and fertile that one would have liked to have been sold more of this various stream of influences. Generally, the Continental artistic background, to which they both owed so much, is less surely and thoroughly handled than the English. Both biographically and artistically, the influence of, say, Manet (as to a lay eye seems particularly important to both of them) would have been welcome. The wartime abstracts, including Grant's lengthy and publishing kinetic collage and work by Vanessa Bell which she came to regret later in life, are of considerable historical interest, and I would have been glad to have

Artists' workshop

By Alan Bell

RICHARD SHONE:
Bloomsbury Portraits
272pp. Oxford: Phaidon. £8.95.

This is fortunately not yet another Bloomsbury book, although the preliminary announcement of this title—a misleading one—did suggest that it might be some sort of album with the usual Strachey legs and Saxon at the piano, eked out with a derivative commentary. It is not such a thing. Richard Shone has broken much new ground in that he is principally concerned with the artistic lives and the works of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant. He sets them in their Bloomsbury background, but as they led relatively quiet lives, avoiding art politics, literary disputes and much of the socializing of the other Bloomsbury friends, Bloomsbury itself is kept at a not unwelcome distance. The Group will come back into the picture, but Mr Shone's rather inadequate summaries of their general attitude to Society or to the First World War show that he has done best to stick to the artistic side.

Even Clive Bell is only patchily covered; he pops on and off biographically and there is a good short assessment of his work, though with too little account of its content for a generation to which Art and Civilization, two fragments of his "New Renaissance", are neither fashionable nor familiar. It is of course Roger Fry who is the animating spirit of this book, and (particularly with Denis Sutton's two-volume edition of Fry's Letters as a useful background for many of his readers), Mr Shone's focus is here much sharper, whether on Fry as portrait painter against the work of the other Bloomsbury painters or more generally on his galvanizing power as a lover, critic or organizer. The love angle is wisely played down and Mr Shone concentrates on the art. He is a modernist, and his account of the English art-world in the first thirty years of the century.

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them more fully set in their background.

Much of the story is familiar from literary sources: the impact of the two Post-Impressionist exhibitions, the early summer seasons of the Russian ballet, and the influence for the painters on colour and on pose and later for the close social involvement of all Bloomsbury; and the First World War itself, with Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell ending up at Charles Town as a settled home as well as a refuge. It is when Mr Shone departs from the necessarily well-worn track that he becomes more interesting. With a good eye for the unfamiliar source, he takes Arnold Bennett's *The Pretty Lady* as his introduction to the Omega workshops.

The walls were irregularly coloured with rhombuses, rhomboids, lozenges, diamonds, triangles and parallelograms. . . . "Would you kindly tell him," was the message Shaw left with the manager for Roger Fry, "that I chose it myself without any prompting from you. He doesn't believe that I've got any taste at all."

Although he admits the limited general influence of the workshop, Mr Shone is careful enough to show their real importance in his subjects' lives. The Omega chapters also enlarge the personnel of the book well beyond the normal Bloomsbury definitions—Gauguin, Edward Wolfe, Keith Bynes, the London Group and others show that in the arts at least, Bloomsbury was not so far apart. Mr Shone is rightly critical of many of the Omega products, particularly the furniture, but he stresses the excellence of the carpet design and the originality of its pottery (which is perhaps more original than excellent when compared with the best of later work). As with the painting exhibition, contemporary criticism is cited with effect, and Mr Shone has been able, after interviewing surviving staff, to build up an interesting picture of the Omega clientele. "Would you kindly tell him," was the message Shaw left with the manager for Roger Fry, "that I chose it myself without any prompting from you. He doesn't believe that I've got any taste at all."

Painters' progress

By David Irwin

WILLIAM HARDIE:
Scottish Painting 1837-1939
112pp and 124 plates. Studio Vista. £12.

Scottish painting from about 1860 to 1914, which was William Hardie tells us, his original brief, forms a coherent period, covering the work of three interrelated generations. Like their English contemporaries, Scottish artists of this period emerged from a variety of Victorian styles through the *fin de siècle* into the glimmerings of a "modern" style, exploiting a multifaceted appreciation of developments in France. The different response to Continental art in this period is a particularly fruitful field of study. A valuable contribution was made recently, for example, in the 1976 exhibition entitled *British Painting 1900-1960*, held in Sheffield and Aberdeen, in which it was especially rewarding to see Scottish and English works hanging side by side. The period after 1900 in British art as a whole is still very much a virgin field of research, with scarcely any adequate monographs, and the key artists, let alone the minor ones.

The next and last chapter, "Between the Wars", should stop in 1939, yet it concludes with flooding comments on such artists as Colquhoun, MacIver, David, and others, whose work has been devoted to such important topics as the impact of Surrealism, which is scarcely touched on, and a more detailed discussion of artists of the period, many of whom are now being forgotten, and consequently are very difficult to see. The best discussion in this chapter—indeed it is one of the most penetrating in the whole book—is devoted to William Thomson, active from the late 1920s onwards, and still producing some of the most original work in Scotland. Mr Hardie quotes extensively from an unpublished letter, as well as using a Hugh MacDiarmid poem written on a Johnstone picture. The date that has gone into this page, on the other hand, is 1939, and another part of the text that consists of little more than lists of names.

I then went further back into the book, from the 1860s to the end of the century. Mr Hardie has already shown in catalogues and articles that he has done a fair amount of work on this period. He organized a good exhibition devoted to Orchardson in 1972, and he helped in the selection of the invaluable Glasgow Boys show in 1968. His articles include a particularly valuable reassessment of the neglected *fin de siècle* Dundee painter, George Dutch Davidson.

This central part of the book is satisfactory and straightforward in its treatment of the main and some of the minor painters. He is at his best in his all too few detailed discussions of artists to whose work he responds with sympathy and enthusiasm, especially Orchardson, Chalmers, Davidson and McTaggart. Good though a few passages in this central part of the book are, the treatment of the period from 1860 to the end of the century is far

less satisfactory. The vitality and variety of the period has been squeezed to make way for the introductory pages covering the three decades before 1860. For reasons that the author does not adequately explain, he has pushed his starting date back to 1837. Nearly three-quarters of the whole text deals with the period from 1837 to 1860, yet disproportionately only a seventh of the plates. It was a mistake to include this period, as the author has under-researched them and by setting the whole of the balance of the rest of the text has made his book far less useful than it might otherwise have been.

A few instances only of the inadequacies of these early chapters will have to suffice here. To say that David Scott's taste in Old Masters in the 1830s was "old-fashioned" is erroneous; his admiration for the unfashionable Mantegna and Signorelli shows he belonged to the avant garde. Dyce, represented in the plates only by landscapes, or houses, as the Royal College of Art is very inadequately treated, especially as a religious artist; surely he was one of the most important in nineteenth-century Britain. Brown's religious paintings are completely overlooked, with an outdated anti-Victorianism, and the author rashly predicts that they will never come back into fashion again. One wonders how many of the painters in the period from the 1830s to the 1860s Mr Hardie has actually seen in the originals, especially when he can claim that the colour of the landscapes by the Reverend John Thomson of Duddingston is "monochromatic". On general points too Mr Hardie is somewhat misleading, especially on the fundamental question of when an identifiable Scottish style emerges, which he sees only after about 1860. This is far too late, as already in the 1830s William was active in the painting of the Scottish landscape.

The "choice" of plates is unbalanced, especially in the allocation of the colour ones. Stuart Park, who on the author's own admission is "relatively insignificant", is allotted two colour plates. Orchardson, Horne and Henry also each have two. Yet of the Colourists, Cadell and Fergusson have no colour plates at all, and neither do such subtle colourists as Guthrie and Lavery. On the plus side, however, it is refreshing to see the important artists such as MacNicol, George Dutch Davidson, and the unexpected Cubist view of Edinburgh painted as early as 1913 by Stanley Currier, together with some good and unbacked-up examples by more important artists such as MacNicol. Regrettably the quality of the colour reproductions is generally crude and inaccurate.

Among the selection of black-and-white plates we are given a whole page of Willie's "Self-Portrait" of 1865, the inevitable "Iron and Coal" by William Bell Scott (who, to the end of the century, is far

of her life. There is nothing to explain her self-portrait of 1954 (illustrated in the collection of Lord Clark—long a discriminating admirer of her work) and there are numerous other works on which some comment would have been useful. And surely for Mr Grant 1937 is too early a breakthrough date; something might have been said of his later life and work, up to and including the recent anti-agency celebrations. Mr Shone need not have recast his book to do this, but he might easily have provided the sense of the goliath in the final pages.

There are 161 black-and-white illustrations and eight colour plates which give a very broad impression of the artists' output and are particularly good for the destroyed or removed interiors—and for existing ones from a Charleston log-boss upwards. The book is well produced, but with too many mistakes, and the gaily patterned boards of the binding have been adapted from a design done by Duncan Grant in 1968. I am rather surprised that the book has been published in revival no one apparently has received the textile designs which he did for Allan Walton in the 1930s. They are very attractive and it would be good to know that they are commercially available again.

The volume ends abruptly with Julia Bell's death in 1937, a termination which while announced in the introduction nevertheless comes as a surprise in the final paragraph. Vanessa Bell did not die until 1961 and a couple of sentences more gradual withdrawal are much too brief for the closing years

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The author's straightforward minor errors include the attribution of Willie's final version of the "Entry of George VI into Holyrood House" to the Royal College of Art, the allocation of an important group of Mackintosh's watercolours to the wrong collection; and the failure to give the present whereabouts of Peter Graham's "Wandering Shadow" (which is in the former Crystal collection, although it has been in the National Gallery of Scotland since 1944. More important grumbles are the absence of footnotes and a complete list of plates.

A good book on Scottish painting from 1860 to 1914, or on to 1939, is still needed, and we eagerly await David Fergusson's volume in the Oxford History of English Art series covering the period from 1870 to 1940, which will include some Scots. One would very much like to have been able to welcome Mr Hardie's book with open arms, but he has disappointed us.

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Fernando Torres, editor

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